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THE REV^D. W. ROMAINE, A.M.

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THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND

WILLIAM ROMAINE, A.M.,

RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW BY THE WARDROBE,
AND ST. ANN, BLACKFRIARS;
AND LECTURER OF ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST, LONDON.

CAREFULLY EDITED,

AND THE

ERRORS OF FORMER EDITIONS EXPUNGED.

COMPRISING THE

LIFE OF MR. ROMAINE, BY THE HON. AND REV. W. B. CADOGAN;
DISCOURSES ON THE LAW AND GOSPEL;
TREATISES ON THE LIFE, WALK, AND TRIUMPH OF FAITH;
COMMENTARY ON THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH PSALM;
LETTERS TO MR. CADOGAN AND MR. WILLS;
SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS AND OCCASIONS;
ESSAY ON PSALMODY;
&c. &c. &c.

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THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM ROMAINE, A. M.

BY

THE HON. AND REV. W. B. CADOGAN, A.M.

PREFACE.

The following Life of the Rev. William Romaine, was undertaken at the request of his nearest relatives. It was promised to the public under the first impressions made by his death, and under an idea that such documents might have been collected from his own papers as would have furnished some of the best materials for his biographers. But nothing of this sort was found, excepting one memorandum upon his attaining the age of seventy years, which is given in the course of this work, though it does not appear to have been designed for publication. Great as is the loss of the survivors, it is much to the honour of the deceased, that though he had the pen of a ready writer, he employed it not upon himself, but upon his God and Saviour. Upon whose word, and upon whose salvation, he hath written largely with his own hand, and left considerable remains behind him.

Disappointed in my expectations of gleaning memoirs of his life from his own manuscripts, and having time to reflect upon an undertaking, in the execution of which I was not likely to satisfy myself or others, I would fain have resigned the task to those who were much better qualified for it than myself, as well by their superior abilities, as by their longer acquaintance with Mr. Romaine. But being pressed to it as to the performance of a promise, I could not resist the solicitation. I have therefore done the best I could—sought information from various quarters, and got it from others without seeking, for which I am thankful. I have given a detail of facts—a history, not a panegyric. Let Mr. Romaine be considered as having been a man of like passions with others, liable to mistakes, and compassed with infirmity. But let God be glorified in him through Jesus Christ, and his end in living, and mine in writing his life, will be fully answered.

W. B. C.

The Rev. William Romaine was born on the twenty-fifth day of September, 1714. The place of his birth was Hartlepool, a town in the county of Durham, situated on a small promontory stretching into the German ocean. It is now a neat fishing town, with a very good pier and harbour, as well as a place of resort for the purpose of bathing. It has risen from obscurity to eminence in that part of England, through the bounty of the neighbouring nobility and gentry, whose custom it has been to accept by turns the office of mayor, and to subscribe upon that occasion one hundred pounds towards the improvements of the town, and particularly for supporting and repairing the pier. The father of the Rev. Mr. Romaine was among the French Protestants who took refuge in England upon the revocation of the edict of Nantes; he settled in this place as a merchant, and became a member of the corporation, which is a very ancient one.

He was a dealer in corn, and a man fearing God, and hating covetousness, of which he gave a remarkable proof in the year 1741. This country was then at war with Spain, and, whether from this circumstance, or from scarcity, there was a considerable advance in the price of wheat, from six to fifteen shillings per boll, the bushel of that county containing about two of the Winchester measure. Upon this occasion the people rose, and came in great numbers, a formidable mob, to Hartlepool. Mr. Romaine went out to meet them, asked them their wants, and was answered that they wanted corn cheaper. He put an immediate and an effectual stop to these riotous proceedings, first by promising to sell all the corn that he had, at five shillings a bushel, and then by performing his promise; for he sold to all that came, while the other merchants refused to sell any.

Such traders, however singular, as he was, are no losers themselves in the end, and great friends to the public in the mean time; what is more, they are ranked among the friends of God; for, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him, but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it." Prov. xi. 24—26.

This scripture was strictly verified in Mr. Romaine of Hartlepool; for the blessing of God and of the poor rested upon him. He brought up a family of two sons and three daughters, who were all comfortably and respectably settled in this world, and taught both by the precept and example of their parents, to look for permanent settlements, or mansions in the world to come. Their father was a man of God, and consequently of strict morals; a steady member of the church of England, a constant attender upon her services, and so exact an observer of the sabbath-day, that he never suffered any of his family to go out upon it, except to church, and spent the remainder of it with them in reading the scriptures, and other devout exercises, at home. In this manner he lived to the age of eighty-five, and to the year of our Lord 1757.*

The surviving widow and one unmarried daughter, continued in the business at Hartlepool, much respected and beloved, being noted for their attention, not only to the bodily wants, but to the spiritual concerns of their fellow-creatures; for it was their custom to read and explain the scriptures to their neighbours, which by some was called preaching; but it was probably no more than domestic instruction, to which they admitted all who wished to partake of it, with a view to the mutual comfort and edification of one another; and such are deservedly ranked among "those women who labour with us in the gospel, and whose names are in the book of life." Phil. iv. 3.

The Rev. William Romaine, was the second† son of these believing parents.‡ Viewed perhaps with the eye of faith, and seen to be a proper child: that is, as the original word signifies, possessed of a certain grace called urbanity, and, in its sacred use, describing one of a fair aspect to God and his people, which indicates a formation for usefulness in the city of the great King. His early discoveries of great talents, and an equal desire to improve them, induced his parents to send him to the grammar school at Houghton le Spring, in the county of Durham, founded by the celebrated rector of that parish, Bernard Gilpin.§ A

* For this account of the birth and parentage of the Rev. Mr. Romaine, we are indebted to Mr. Callendar, of Newcastle, who married one of his sisters.

† His elder and only brother was settled as a grocer in London, and died suddenly at the George Inn, at Buckden, in the thir ieth year of his age.

‡ I call his parents believers by his own authority, finding the following expressions in a letter to a friend, dated July 30th, 1784. "We hope next Monday to set out for the North. In all probability for the last time. I have three sisters alive, all in years as well as myself, and we are to have a family meeting, to take our leave, final as to this life. It has brought a great solemnity upon my spirits; and would be too much for my feelings, had I not all the reason in the world to believe that our next meeting will be in glory. Mr. Whitfield used often to put me in mind, how singularly favoured I was. He had none of his family converted; and my father and mother, and three sisters, were like those blessed people, And Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus: and as they loved him again, so do we."

§ See an account of this school in the life of Bernard Gilpin, in the second volume of the Rev. Mr. Middleton's biography, p. 205, &c.

school which flourished much in the time of its founder; nor did it lose its credit after his decease, as a "seminary of sound learning and religious knowledge, from which many have gone to our universities and proved great ornaments to the church and nation" Among these surely may be reckoned that eminent person who is the subject of these memoirs: he was seven years at Houghton school, and, having acquired all the learning which that institution afforded, was sent to Oxford in the year 1730 or 1731. He was first entered at Hertford College, and thence removed to Christ Church. His tutor (as I think he has been heard to say) was the Rev. Mr. Fifield Allen, who was afterwards chaplain to Bishop Gibson, archdeacon of Middlesex, subdean of the chapel royal, a prebendary of St. Paul's, and editor of the three Electras used in Westminster school. His proficiency under his tutor, whoever he was, may be inferred from his early appearance as an author, and that not of the common sort, but as one who had read much before he wrote any thing; who had particularly studied the scriptures in their original tongues, as an essential preparative for that holy function to which he was destined, and in which he afterwards excelled so much to the edifying of the church.

As a proof of his employment in the seats of literature, and of the estimation in which he was held by his superiors in them, we have a remarkable anecdote, brought forward in the excellent sermon upon his death, preached and published by his late curate, and present successor in the church of Blackfriars: "Dress was never his foible, his mind was superior to such borrowed ornaments; and, immersed in nobler pursuits of literature, before consecrated to a still more exalted purpose, he paid but little attention to outward decorations. Being observed to pass by rather negligently attired, a visitor inquired of his friend, a master of one of the colleges, 'Who is that slovenly person with his stockings down?' The master replied, 'That slovenly person as you call him, is one of the greatest geniuses of the age, and is likely to be one of the greatest men in the kingdom.'"*

He resided principally at Oxford, till he took his degree of Master of Arts, which he did on the fifteenth day of October, 1737, having been ordained a deacon at Hereford a year before, by the then bishop of that see, Dr. Henry Egerton; whether by a nomination to a cure in his diocese, or by letters dismissory from some other bishop, is not certain. His first engagement, after he was in orders, was the curacy of Loe Trenchard, near Lidford in Devonshire. He went there upon a visit with one of his contemporaries at Oxford, whose father lived at Lidford; and upon the express condition, that his friend would find him employment in the way of his profession. This employment was accordingly found for him in the church aforementioned, which he served for six months, most probably, of the year in which he took his master's degree. In the year following, he was resident at Epsom, in Surrey, as appears by a letter, dated from that place, October 4th, 1738, and written to Mr. Warburton, upon the publication of his first volume of the Divine Legation of Moses; of which letter some notice shall be presently taken. And on the fifteenth day of December, in the same year, he was ordained a priest by the then bishop of Winchester, Dr. Benjamin Hoadly. His title for orders was most probably a nomination to the church of Banstead, which he served for some years together with that of Horton, in Middlesex, being curate to Mr. Edwards, who had both these livings. At Banstead, he became acquainted with Sir Daniel Lambert, who had a country house in that parish, an alderman of the city of London, and elected lord mayor in the year 1741. Mr. Romaine was appointed his chaplain, and so had a door of utterance opened to him in the cathedral church of St. Paul; where he delivered the second sermon that he printed on the 14th and 15th verses of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; in which is to be found a critical and a Christian illustration of that difficult passage. Though we do not discover in this sermon the same fertile experience, use, and application of the truth, as are to be found in his latter writings; yet we discover the same truth itself by which he was then made free from the errors

* See Mr. Goode's funeral sermon, and the authorities there referred to.

of the day, and in the knowledge and enjoyment of which he lived and died. We discover in it the reasoning of a logical head, the writing of a classical pen, the religion of a believing heart, and the preaching of a sound divine. The point evidently pursued in it is redemption from sin by the blood of Jesus, as it was revealed from God to Adam, and through him to the patriarchs; to Moses and the prophets, and through them to the Israelites; and as it was conveyed to the Gentiles, before the preaching of the gospel among them, by tradition; which is the only probable cause of their sacrifices, or appeasing the Deity by the shedding of blood, a custom so unnatural in itself, and yet so universally prevalent among them. In short, the object of this discourse, is to prove that a creature, whether upright or fallen, was never made to teach himself, but to learn from his Maker; and to hold forth to men the only religion which is suited to their fallen condition: not as the religion of nature, but as the religion of grace; not as a human device, but as a divine revelation. And let the author of it be considered as having attained only to the age of twenty-seven years, and he may be thought to have discovered in it a maturity of judgment, a proficiency of reading, meditation, and doctrine, to which few in so early a period of life have attained.

The truth is, he was a believer—possessed of that unfeigned faith which dwelt in his father and his mother before him, and we are persuaded that it was in him also. And that from a child he had known the scriptures, having studied them with that proper faculty, by which alone they are able to make us wise unto salvation, *viz.* faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. i. 5; ii. 15.

The sermon which he printed prior to that just mentioned, was one preached before the University of Oxford, March 4th, 1739, entitled, The Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated, from his having made express mention of, and insisted so much on, the doctrine of a future state: whereby Mr. Warburton's Attempt to prove the Divine Legation of Moses from the Omission of a Future State is proved to be absurd and destructive of all revelation.

This was followed above two years after by a second sermon upon the same subject, and from the same text, entitled, "Future Rewards and Punishments, proved to be the Sanctions of the Mosaic Dispensation." This sermon was preached at St. Mary's in Oxford, in the end of the year 1741, and printed in the beginning of the next year.

Whoever wishes to know more of this controversy between Mr. Romaine and Mr. Warburton may get some information from the second volume of the History of the Works of the Learned, for August, 1739, where are to be found Mr. Romaine's original letter to Mr. Warburton, and a second to the editor of the General Evening Post, occasioned by the publication of the first, with Mr. Warburton's remarks in this paper.

There is nothing in them as to the main question then in agitation, but what is to be found in the sermons upon the same subject, of which they appear to be sketches. One of them was written in the spirit of irony and sarcasm, to a person who knew the use of those weapons much better than Mr. Romaine, and who needed them more in aid of his strange paradoxies than his opponent did in support of sound doctrine. In this should appear, as a good judge hath informed us, "incorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he who is of a contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you," Tit. ii. 7, 8. These are weapons with which they who are valiant for the truth may always contend lawfully. Nor is the want of them to be complained of in Mr. Romaine's sermons upon this controversy. Mr. Warburton's complaints against him were, that he professed admiration for a work and its author, which he did not mean, and put into the mouths of others, in a private letter, what he afterwards published as his own arguments against the plan of the Divine Legation. The whole account was inserted in the periodical history of letters before mentioned, at the request of Mr. Warburton, by his friend Mr. Birch, who was afterwards Dr. Birch, and librarian of the British Museum; and who has been pleased to enrich this famous repository with the manuscript letters which occasioned the insertion of it. Neither the printed account nor the manuscript letters will repay the trouble of reading them. The

one is the representation of enemies, to whom Mr. Romaine laid himself open; the others are the most scurrilous effusions of malevolence, abusive language, and opprobrious names in the flowing style of Mr. Warburton. Both parties are dead, and their disputes forgotten. Nor could it answer any good purpose to revive them; unless this transient recollection of a period, in the life of an eminent man, may operate as a caution to young men to be sober-minded, to study godliness and a holy life, and to leave the arts of controversy till the wit or the warmth of youth have been corrected by the wisdom and temper of age.

Mr. Romaine was at this time engaged in preparing for the press a new edition of the Hebrew Concordance and Lexicon of Marius de Calasio, a work which employed him seven years, and the first volume of it was published in the year 1747.

Whilst he is justly celebrated as the editor of Calasio, he is perhaps no less justly censured for having omitted his author's account of the word which is usually rendered God, and having substituted his own in the body of the work. This is what no editor can have a right to do by any author. Had Mr. Romaine left Calasio's exposition of the word in its place, and given his own in a note or in the margin, he might have had the credit of having restored to light, without the charge of having depreciated, one of the best and most useful works that ever was published.

Though I agree with Mr. Romaine in the interpretation of the word, not only as it is a plural noun describing a plurality of persons in the divine essence, but as it is a derivative of a verb, which signifies to swear, and so describes those persons under the obligation of an oath, yet I do not undertake his vindication in this instance.

But he thought himself excusable, and made his own apology in an address to the reader, which he prefixed to the work. His words are these: "I have endeavoured to perform the office of a faithful editor; you have Marius himself not in the least diminished or added to, excepting only one place, and that of such great consequence, that I should have thought it a crime if I had neglected to amend it. This I have done with the best intention, and only this once; I hope therefore that it may be pardoned."* To which he adds, that he has marked this place with inverted commas, as he has many of his additions under the particles.

He has therefore warned the reader of what he is to expect, and has made his own excuse, by which he must stand or fall in the public opinion. He was a man, and in common with all others, liable to err: he was a young man when he was the editor of Marius, and still younger when he was the antagonist of Mr. Warburton. In both instances he may have fallen into mistakes, which days that should speak, and multitude of years that should speak wisdom, might have corrected or prevented.

> Veram ubi plura nitent——non ego paucis
> Offendar maculis quas aut incuria fudit,
> Aut humana parum cavit natura.

But where there are so many shining qualities in a character, and so many excellencies in his life and writings, I will not take offence at a few blemishes, which incaution may have scattered here and there, or against which human nature is provided with no caution at all.

We leave, therefore, the controversial divine, and the laborious editor of the Hebrew Lexicon and Concordance, and proceed to the contemplation of a man, who, having acquired a degree of eminence from the fruits of his youthful studies, became still more eminent as a minister of the church of England; who, for the space of forty-seven years, from that period, preached and adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour, with a steadiness and consistency almost

* Fidi editoris officio fungi conatus sum; Marium ipsum habes ne minimâ quidem ex parte vel imminutum vel exauctum, unum modo locum excipias, eumque tam magni quidem momenti, ut criminis duxissem sane, si emendare neglexissem. Hoc optimo feci animo, nec plus vice simplici; spero igitur et ignoscendum.

peculiar to himself; and who has left a testimony for the truth in his life and writings, which ranks him among the noble army of witnesses, who, having praised God upon earth, shall praise him for evermore in heaven.

It was certainly Mr. Romaine's plan, after he had finished his edition of the Concordance and Lexicon of Marius de Calasio, to have returned into his native county; and he had actually packed up his trunk, and set it on shipboard with that view. But God had other plans for him. For as he himself was going to the water-side, in order to secure his own passage, he was met by a gentleman, a total stranger to him, who asked him if his name was not Romaine. He replied that it was. The gentleman had formerly been acquainted with his father, and observing a strong resemblance to him in his son, was induced to make the inquiry. After some apologies for this abrupt address, and some little conversation concerning his family and himself, the gentleman told him that the lectureship for the united parishes of St. George's, Botolph Lane, and St. Botolph's, Billingsgate, was then vacant; and that, having some interest in those parishes, he would exert it in his behalf, if he would become a candidate for the lectureship. Mr. Romaine consented, provided he should not be obliged to canvass in person; a custom which he always thought inconsistent with the character of a clergyman, and against which he openly protested many years afterward, when he was candidate for the living of Blackfriars: so that his objection to canvass was not a hasty impression taken up in his youth, but a settled persuasion that continued with him: aud, as he was never backward to acknowledge the obligation when received, so (as Mr. Goode justly observes in his funeral sermon) it "was not pride, but principle."

It was in the year 1748 that he was chosen lecturer of St. Botolph's, and he is mentioned among the preferred in the Gentleman's Magazine for November, of that year, as the editor of Calasio's Dictionary.

It has been thought (and inferred from some expressions of his own in one of his letters published since his death) that his determination to leave London was the result of disappointment and disgust. That he had come to the metropolis "strongly intrenched in notions of his own exalted abilities, and flattering himself that he required no other recommendation to rapid preferment, where talent was always admired, and justly estimated."* He is supposed to have alluded to some circumstances of this kind in a letter to an intimate friend, in which he speaks of "having known a very vain proud young man, who knew almost every thing but himself, and was therefore very fond of himself; who met with many disappointments to his pride, which only made him prouder, till the Lord was pleased to let him see and feel the plague of his own heart. That, upon the discovery of this he tried every method that can be tried to give peace, but found none. In despair of all things else, he betook himself to Jesus, and was most kindly received. He trusted to the word of promise, and experienced the sweetness of promise. After this he went through various frames and trials of faith, too many to mention." All this and much more Mr. Romaine writes concerning himself, to illustrate by his own experience the truth of such sayings as these, that, "the Holy Spirit will glorify nothing but Jesus. He will stain the pride of all greatness and of all goodness, excepting what is derived from the fulness of the incarnate God."

I do not see how it can be inferred from hence, that pride of heart, issuing in vain expectations of preferment, was the leading feature in Mr. Romaine's character. It is well known how every Christian thinks, speaks, and writes of himself, each claiming a title, which none but Paul would have given to Paul, of the chief of sinners. It is well known also, that every young man is naturally conceited, and thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, till he learns by experience to think otherwise. It was certainly with good reason that St. Paul advised Timothy to "exhort young people to be sober-minded."

Mr. Romaine, no doubt, had this lesson to learn; he had his share of pride and vanity, and (according to a common saying in the world) he had much to be

* See Memoir of the late Rev. William Romaine in the Evangelical Magazine for November, 1795

proud of; a good understanding—a good education—great excellency of speech, and many enticing things of man's wisdom. He might raise from hence ideal prospects of worldly greatness, and had reason to be thankful, if he was disappointed; if, "walking by faith and not by sight, he could prefer the afflictions of God's people to the pleasures of sin, and the reproach of Christ to the treasures of Egypt." But as to being settled in the metropolis, many of his friends have heard him say, that it was the thing of all others which he last thought of, and to which he was the least inclined. It may be supposed, indeed, that from the bent of his genius to the study of nature, of minerals, fossils, plants, and the wonders of God in creation, that a country life, so favourable to these pursuits, would have been chosen by him. But God chose otherwise for him; and by a circumstance as trivial to appearance, as it was accidental, but in reality a turn of providence, such as decides the present condition of most men, called him to the lectureship of St. Botolph's, and so detained him in London, where he was kept to the end of his existence as a witness for Jesus Christ, with abilities as much suited to this meridian, as those of the Apostle Paul to the meridians of Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome.

In the year following, *viz.* 1749, he was chosen lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West. In the person of his predecessor* two lectureships were united, the one endowed, and founded by Dr. White for the use of the benchers of the temple; the other a common parish lectureship, supported by voluntary contributions. Mr. Romaine was elected to both, and continued some years in the quiet exercise of his office, till the faithful discharge of it raised violent clamours and opposition against him. The rector then thought fit to dispute his right to the pulpit, and occupied it himself during the time of prayers, in order to exclude him from it. Mr. Romaine appeared constantly in his place, to assert his claim to the lectureship, as well as his readiness to perform the office. The affair was at length carried into the court of King's Bench; † the decision of which deprived Mr. Romaine of the parish lectureship, but confirmed him in that founded by Dr. White, and endowed with a salary of eighteen pounds a year. Lest this should be removed from the parish, the use of the church was granted him: but as Lord Mansfield's decision was, that seven o'clock in the evening was a convenient time to preach the lecture, the churchwardens refused to open the church till that hour, and to light it when there was occasion; so that Mr. Romaine frequently read prayers and preached by the light of a single candle, which he held in his own hand. The church doors being shut until the precise moment fixed for preaching the lecture, the congregation was usually assembled in the street, and there waiting for admission. The consequence was a concourse of people, collected indeed without noise and tumult, but not without great inconvenience to those who passed that way, among whom happened to be one evening the then bishop of London, Dr. Terrick who had been Mr. Romaine's predecessor in the lectureship. Observing the crowd, he inquired into the cause of it; and being told that it was Mr. Romaine's audience in these circumstances, he interfered with the rector and churchwardens in their behalf, expressed great respect for Mr. Romaine, and obtained for him and his hearers, that the service of the church should begin at six o'clock, that the doors should be opened in proper time, and that lights should be provided for the winter season. From this period Mr. Romaine was established in his ministry at St. Dunstan's, and continued quietly in the exercise of it, to the edification of many, until the end of his life. Here surely he might set up a way-mark in course of his pilgrimage, and say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my defence, I shall not be moved." Psal. lxii. 5, 6.

In the year 1750, Mr. Romaine was appointed assisting morning preacher in the parish of St. George, Hanover square. This office has no settled establishment, but merely dependent on the will of the rector, and the person procured by him at his own option and expense. The rector, who both called him to

* Dr. Terrick, afterwards bishop of Peterborough and London.
† In the year 1762.

this office, and removed him from it, was Dr. Andrew Trebeck. The first act originated not in personal friendship, but in the recommendation of his character; the latter arose from the popularity and plainness of his ministry. He preached Christ crucified among those who are least disposed to receive him. The church was filled with the poor, and forsaken by the rich; and that which (as a nobleman is said to have observed) was never complained of in a playhouse, was admitted as a just cause of complaint in the house of God. When notice was given him that the crowd of people attending from different parts caused great inconvenience to the inhabitants, who could not safely get to their seats, he received it in the most placid manner, and said, "he was willing to relinquish an office which he had faithfully performed, hoping that his doctrine had been Christian, and owning the inconvenience which had attended the parishioners." In this instance, therefore, as well as in many others, he suffered as a Christian, and had reason to rejoice: for the spirit of glory and of God rested upon him, endowing him with the meekness and gentleness of his Master, and enabling him to serve his cause by his conduct, when he could no longer do it by his sermons.*

Mr. Romaine entered upon this office in St. George's parish on the first of April, 1750, and retired from it on the twenty-eighth day of September, 1755, during which time he preached occasionally at Bow church, in exchange with Dr. Newton, (afterwards bishop of Bristol) then rector of that parish, and lecturer of St. George's, Hanover Square, and also at Curzon chapel, then called St. George's chapel, Mayfair, in exchange with Dr. Trebeck himself, who was morning preacher there.

The times in which he was called to the exercise of his ministry in the west end of the metropolis, were distinguished by some signal judgments of Almighty God; such particularly as were the earthquakes by which Lisbon was destroyed, and London threatened; two shocks having been felt in it, and a third expected. These judgments were preceded by great profligacy of manners, and its fruitful parent, licentiousness of principle. "As to faith," says one who preached on that occasion, "are not the doctrines of the Trinity, and divinity of our Lord and Saviour, without which our redemption is absolutely void, and we are yet in our sins, with the intolerable burden of the wrath of God lying upon us, blasphemed and ridiculed openly in conversation and print? As to unity of spirit, are we not distracted and torn to pieces with schisms and separations? And as to righteousness of life, are not the people of this land dead in trespasses and sins, idleness, drunkenness, luxury, extravagance and debauchery? For these things cometh the wrath of God, and disordered nature proclaims the impending distress and perplexity of nations. And O may we of this nation never read a hand-writing upon the wall of heaven in the illuminated capitals of the Almighty, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN: God hath numbered the kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances of heaven, and found wanting the merits of a rejected Redeemer, and therefore thy kingdom is divided and given away."†

Mr. Romaine was not wanting upon the present occasion, as appears from two sermons in print, entitled, "An Alarm to a Careless World," and "The Duty of Watchfulness enforced;" sermons which are not exceeded in any of his writings. In both, and particularly in the preface to the former, there are some valuable antidotes against the prevailing philosophy of the day, which ascribed every

* For information upon these circumstances in Mr. Romaine's life, I am indebted to the present rector of St. George's, the bishop of Bristol, and to the clerk in orders, Mr. Trebeck, Dr. Trebeck's son, to whom his lordship was so good as to refer me. The latter, after having given the above account of Mr. Romaine's retirement from St. George's, adds the following words: "I shall be always ready to attest his zeal, and in conversation with him during that time, and occasionally afterwards, I found him mild and friendly."

† See a sermon preached before the university of Oxford on Sunday, February 15th, 1756; and at several other places, on occasion of the late earthquakes and public fast, by George Horne, M.A. and fellow of Magdalene college; afterwards dean of Canterbury, and bishop of Norwich.

It is a pity that this sermon was not reprinted among those which have been collected into one volume since his death.

thing to second causes, and almost denied the existence of the first, excluding the God of nature from the works of nature, and refusing to acknowledge him as the author of judgments, and sin, committed against his divine Majesty as the cause of them. This, as he tells us in the preface before mentioned, was the philosophy of the year 1750, when the "learned accounted for earthquakes, by changing their name into airquakes, and then they were explained philosophically."

Such was the state of religion and morals, when he was called to bear his testimony in the fashionable world. Having received the ministry of light and truth, he fainted not in the discharge of it, nor had recourse to the hidden things of dishonesty to recommend it: but used great plainness of speech, that by manifestation of the truth he might commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He spoke freely of the manners of the great, and endeavoured to bring them to an acquaintance with their own heart, as the seat and source of all iniquity, and with Jesus Christ, as the great purifier of the heart through faith in his blood. With what judgment and clearness he brought these truths to the ears of the wise after the flesh, the mighty and noble of this world, may be seen in specimens of his preaching before them left in print, such as a sermon entitled, "A Method for Preventing the Frequency of Robberies and Murders;" and another "Discourse on the Self-existence of Jesus Christ;" both delivered at St. George's, Hanover Square.

It was in this period of his life that Mr. Romaine was called to the professorship of astronomy in Gresham college. He had not the highest opinion of the religion, morals, or wisdom of the age; and in the discharge of his duty in this new office he pursued a plan which ran counter to them all. He attempted to prove that God was best acquainted with his own works, and had given the best account of them in his own words. He disputed some part of the Newtonian philosophy, with a boldness and banter which were not likely to be well received, when derogating from the honour of a man who was held little less than divine. And as he observed in the mathematics, astronomy, and geometry of the day, "a difference in their demonstrations of no less than one hundred and twenty-one millions of miles," so he spoke of the "modern divinity as bringing you no nearer than one hundred and twenty-one millions of miles short of heaven." The only traces that I have ever met with of his conduct, in this professorship, are to be found in the Gentleman's Magazine for the month of March, 1752 The reader may have recourse to this account, if he pleases, and must judge for himself how far it is just and impartial.

If Mr. Romaine quitted this office in enmity with the world, he quitted it no doubt in friendship with God, for he had God's honour at heart, however he might not have consulted his own; he had therefore God's promise in hand, "They that honour me, I will honour." In proof of this, I cannot but observe, that whatever credit he lost in the city of London, as professor of philosophy in Gresham college, he retrieved it an hundred-fold in a business of a very different nature which happened about the same time; I mean the famous Jew Bill. By his opposition to which, both in preaching and print, he rose and increased in favour with God and man. His reasonings upon this subject, and answers to every thing that was attempted in vindication of a project so contrary to the decrees and declarations of heaven, and so injurious to the religious, civil, and commercial interests of this country, were collected by himself in a pamphlet, which was reprinted by the citizens of London in the year 1753, and it is a masterly performance, which will bear printing again.

Mr. Jones, in his life of Dr. Horne, late Bishop of Norwich, with which he has just favoured the world, has a passage so much to our present purpose, that I have taken the liberty of transcribing it. "In the year when the Jew Bill was depending, and after it had passed the house, he (Mr. Horne) frequently employed himself in sending to an evening paper of the time, certain communications which were much noticed, while the author was totally unknown, except among some of his nearest acquaintance. By the favour of a great lady, it was my fortune (though then very young) to be at a table where some persons of the

first quality were assembled, and I heard one of them* very earnest on the matter and style of some of these papers, of which I knew the secret history, and was not a little diverted when I knew what passed about them. To the author of these papers, the Jew Bill gave so much offence (and the Marriage Bill not much less), that he refused to dine at the table of a neighbouring gentleman, where he was much admired, only because the son-in-law of Mr. Pelham was to be there; he was therefore highly gratified by the part taken in that perilous business by the Rev. William Romaine, who opposed the considerations dispersed about the kingdom in defence of the Jew Bill with a degree of spirit and success, which reminded us of Swift's opposition to Wood's Halfpence in his Drapier's Letters."

This honourable mention of one who is now literally a departed brother,† reflects equal honour upon him that made it, nor can it fail of giving pleasure to all lovers of peace and truth, as it brings two old friends and acquaintance together, who pursued the same path of study, though they have been cast into different habits of life, who have contended for the same faith, fought with the same weapons, worshipped the same God, and steadily adhered to the same communion. Why should a doubt be entertained of their happy meeting in heaven, and of their rejoicing together in the beatific vision of the Lord their God? Why should such a doubt arise even from their last meeting upon earth? which was indeed extraordinary, but of which no notice might have been taken in these memoirs, had it not made its first appearance in the Evangelical Magazine, under the signature of T. H. as an anecdote of Mr. Romaine, "more characteristic of the man" (as this writer is pleased to say) "than might be found in twenty lives of him." How far the trait, as he has drawn it, is lovely in the character of a "venerable saint," every one must judge for himself, who reads the extract from the Magazine for the month of March, as it is given verbatim in the note below.‡ The truth, as I have it under the hand of one present

* Lord Temple.

† A name was given to Mr. Romaine by *certain gentlemen*, whose *apology* was so ably written by one who rose to the bishopric of Norwich. They may all be ranked among the brightest ornaments and best friends of the church of England. They differed from Mr. Romaine only in the use, application, and enjoyment of the truths they held, which he sought personally for himself, and in the boldness and fervent zeal with which he endeavoured to propagate them to others. This happy, or unhappy turn (as the world is pleased to call it) led him into what some of his former friends called serious mistakes and irregularities. But the church of England had never a more dutiful, affectionate, and illustrious son than William Romaine.

‡ "If twenty lives were written of Mr. Romaine, they will, I am confident, produce nothing more characteristic of the man than the following anecdote. I insert the names, perhaps you will prefer the initials. T. H.

"About three weeks before the last illness of that venerable patriarch, Mr. Romaine, he was walking in the city, and followed close by Dr. G. of Islington, and Mr. J. of Pluckley, who had been formerly his intimate acquaintance, and, like many other old Hutchinsonian friends, had long forsaken and shunned him. His friendship, they knew, was not the road to Canterbury.

"Niger est hunc tu Romane caveto.

"Dr. G. said, 'There goes Mr. Romaine just before us.' Mr. J. replied, 'He is an old acquaintance of mine,' and, in his facetious manner, whipped by Mr. Romaine, and turning round, stopped him full; just then Dr. G. was at his elbow: Mr. Romaine looked at him. 'Do not you know me, Mr. R.?' said he. 'No,' said the venerable saint, 'nor my Master neither;' and turning round on his heel, crossed the way with contempt and indignation, leaving them confounded at this unexpected reception."

Such is the famous anecdote which is to supply the place of twenty lives! It impressed the present rector of Blackfriars as such a stigma upon his late venerable friend and predecessor, as well as such an undeserved reflection upon a great character now living, that he immediately sent to the editor of the Evangelical Magazine, the following letter:

Sir,—In your Magazine for the last month I observed an anecdote of my late venerable rector, Mr. Romaine, which, had it been true, I was at a loss to account for the reasons of its insertion. If meant as a compliment, it has generally been understood as a reflection; while it casts an undeserved odium also on two characters that are very worthily respected. But as the statement which has appeared is altogether erroneous, I have no doubt but you will be ready to counteract the effect which it has produced by publishing the circumstances, as I received them from unquestionable authority, not long after they took place.

at the interview, was simply this. A little while before the death of Mr. Romaine, Mr. Jones and Dr. Gaskin overtook him in Cheapside, and Mr. Jones very good-naturedly proposed speaking to his old acquaintance, and on getting up to him, he said with a cheerful countenance, "Mr. Romaine, I do not know whether you recollect one William Jones, but I do know that I do not forget you." To which Mr. Romaine made a laconic reply, which neither of the gentlemen distinctly heard, but the words impressed upon them at the moment were, "No, nor my Master, I hope;" and true it is, that Mr. Romaine, after having made this answer, turned upon his heel and crossed the street, leaving them not a little astonished at this unexpected reception. It might be unexpected to them, but it was not an uncommon reception for Mr. Romaine to give in the street to his most intimate friends. He had a natural quickness, and sometimes roughness in his manner, which were often mistaken, when not meant, for anger and rudeness. He was seldom in the street but upon business; and being intent upon his engagement, and as frugal of his time as he was prodigal of his labour, he seldom saluted any man by the way, neither was it his custom to fall out by the way. It is probable that he meant to cast no reflection upon his old friend, but to stir up his pure mind by way of remembrance, and to express a Christian hope that, as he had recognised the servant, he had not forgotten his Lord and Master. Nor is it likely that he should then treat one with contempt, with whom he had formerly lived in habits of friendship, and of whom he had always spoken to others with respect and affection. Mr. Jones could have had nothing in view but good will and good manners; and though he might have been hurt at this sort of reception from an old acquaintance, there is no reason to think that he is now ill-affected towards him, or that he designed any other than an honourable mention of him, after his decease, when he introduced his name into the life of Dr. Horne.

Just, however, as the comparison may be between the spirit and success of Dr. Jonathan Swift and Mr. William Romaine, the causes in which they were engaged will admit of no comparison. Permission to an individual to coin halfpence may be productive of mischief as injurious to trade, and as exciting to envy; but an attempt to naturalise the outcasts of heaven, who have filled up the measure of their iniquities in crucifying their King, was an attempt against

The Rev. Dr. G. and the Rev. Mr. J. were walking together in Cheapside, when the sight of Mr. Romaine at a distance gave rise to the following conversation.

Mr. J. There is Mr. Romaine—do you know him?

Dr. G. No. I have no personal acquaintance with him.

Mr. J. Does he know you personally?

Dr. G. I am not sure that he does; have you any knowledge of him?

Mr. J. Yes. Some years ago we were very intimate, and he has been at my house some days together; I will speak to him.

As Mr. Romaine came near, he was addressed by Mr. J. in this manner—"How do you do, Mr. Romaine? I do not know whether you forgot one William J. I do not forget you." To which Mr. Romaine replied, "No, nor my Master neither, I hope." Without waiting for a reply, he crossed the street and passed on. In whatever way Mr. Romaine's answer be understood, it implies no such reflection on Mr. J. as is so strongly marked in the statement you have given. I am rather inclined to think he meant it as a compliment, as I have heard him express himself in terms of great respect, as to the person he then spoke to.

No idea of disrespect need be attached to his immediately passing from them, for it was what Mr. Romaine would frequently do to his most intimate friends, as he had almost as great an aversion to stop talking in the street, as in the church, in the latter of which he was so remarkable, and so worthy of imitation. I conceive, sir, it is a justice due to all parties, to insert this, for the authenticity of which I am responsible.

I am yours,

Blackfriars, March 23, 1796. WILLIAM GOODE.

Why was not this letter inserted, or at least acknowledged? Should not a work, called "Evangelical," be careful to speak evil of no man? Should it not, if it accuse falsely, take the earliest opportunity of acknowledging its error? Is it fair to suppose that Mr. J.'s intimacy with Mr. Romaine should have been discontinued from an idea that it would obstruct his preferment in the world? Does not the character of Mr. J. as a scholar, a clergyman, and a Christian, stand too high to be soiled by a paragraph in the Evangelical Magazine? Or is it to be inferred, from the general tenor and tendency of his life and writings, that the Judge of quick and dead will deny him at the great day, and include him in that awful sentence, "Depart from me, I never knew you?"

the laws and authority of the Most High, no less daring than that of the apostate emperor to rebuild Jerusalem. It was an attempt which proved the infidelity of the times in which it was made, for had Moses and the prophets been consulted, they had informed the world ages before, that the Jews should be a proverb, an astonishment, and an hissing, among all nations, until their conversion to God, and their acknowledgment of that same Jesus whom their fathers crucified, as Lord and Christ. As no act of parliament can convert, so none can naturalise them. It is surprising that the fulfilment of the Scriptures, in the dispersion and disgrace of that extraordinary people, has not more effect than it seems to have upon sceptical minds. The veracity of the Bible we cannot dispute, but the contents of it we cannot receive, as long as we are influenced by the spirit of the world; nor will arguments or facts convince us, when our vices and inclinations oppose them.

It has been the opinion of those who have been best acquainted with divine truth and human nature, that the enmity of the one against the other is not so much in the head as in the heart of man. The apostle indeed represents the heart as the seat of faith, and of infidelity; for as he tells us in one place, that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," so he guards us in another against an "evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." I have been told (and I think by Mr. Romaine himself) that the late Rev. William Grimshaw, minister of Haworth, in Yorkshire, used to be much with Lady Huntingdon, when she was in that part of the country; and had frequent arguments with her son, the late Lord Huntingdon, upon the subject of religion. In one of them he said, "I perceive that your lordship's quarrel with religion is not in your head, but in your heart." His lordship was so affected with the remark, that he never encountered that antagonist again.

As this Mr. Grimshaw was an eminently pious and laborious clergyman * (perhaps the most so for his own or any time), so he was among the particular friends of Mr. Romaine. Soon after his death, which happened in the year 1763, Mr. Romaine preached at Haworth. His text was that well-chosen passage, Acts xi. 23: "Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." The distress of the people for the loss of so valuable a man, and their anxiety about a successor, were not to be described. The sermon was striking and impressive, and had the good effect of putting them upon fervent and united prayers for the continuance of their spiritual privileges, and the event answered their utmost wishes. The clergyman who succeeded was the Rev. John Richardson, a person of an excellent spirit, whose views of divine truth were remarkably clear and evangelical, and whose unaffected piety and exemplary conduct continued to be an ornament to the church of God, and a blessing to that parish, till the year 1791, when he was called to his everlasting rest.†

In February 1755, Mr. Romaine changed his condition by marrying Miss Price, who now sits as a widow to lament the loss of a most faithful, affectionate, and attentive husband; and to whom I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks for many authentic communications concerning him. Upon leaving his situation in St. George's, Hanover Square, or soon after, he became curate and morning preacher at St. Olave's Southwark, upon which office he entered in the beginning of the year 1756, and continued in it to the year 1759; and to this congregation he dedicated his sermon upon the parable of the dry bones in Ezekiel, preached in their church, and published at their desire. He resided the first year in the rectory house, and removed from hence into Walnut-tree Walk, Lambeth. Here he had a delightful retreat, in which he spent some of the happiest of his years. A little garden, which he dressed, kept, and planted; and as he viewed the productions of it with faith, and received them with thank-

* I am happy to hear that his life is coming before the public, from the pen of a well-known, a most able and useful writer.

† We are indebted for this account to Mr. Whitaker, now of Ringway, in Cheshire, who was born in the parish of Haworth. "And though," says he, "I did not hear Mr Romaine preach, and was too young to have made any observations, yet I have often heard the people speak of it with the greatest satisfaction and thankfulness."

fulness, he converted it into another Eden. Here he received his friends, particularly serious candidates for orders, and his younger brethren in the ministry, admitting them to his early breakfasts, and feeding them with knowledge and understanding. An interview of this sort, with a clergyman now living, has been kindly communicated to me, and the following account of it drawn up by his own hand. "I breakfasted one morning with Mr. Romaine, somewhere I think in Lambeth parish, but it is now many years since. On taking the bread prepared, which I thought good, he mentioned the circumstance of the late Dr. John Fothergill's having in some cases advised the not giving to sick people, and especially to weakly ailing children, preparations from London bread, on account 'of the too frequent adulteration it underwent previous to baking.' I was then a young clergyman, and shall not easily forget the manner (for I still feel the impression) of his turning the subject to the ministeral administration of the bread of life to the people. He touched very clearly and forcibly on a varicty of modes by which the word of God was perverted, and the ill-leaven and other ingredients too often mixed with that heaven-imparted sustenance, which was intended to be meat indeed; and this he did in such familiar, easy, and yet pointed terms, and with that paternal benignity of look, as left me equally pleased, and, I trust, improved by the interview. It rendered bread to me of more value, both as a support and as a sign. I have yet cause to thank him for the discussion it produced, and shall ever revere his memory for so well-timed and happy an allusion.

"The same morning I remember well his mentioning it as in his opinion a fault, to preach censoriously, sarcastically, or harshly of brethren in the ministry, or of others, however remote from ourselves in matters of sentiment and persuasion. My friend, Mr. George Whitefield, said he, one day told me very candidly, that there was a time in his life, when he thought he had never well closed a sermon without a lash of the fat, downy doctors of the establishment. At that period, said he, I was not lean myself, though much slenderer than since. I went on, however, and seldom failed to touch pretty smartly upon the objects of my dissatisfaction, till one day, getting up into the pulpit in Tottenham-court-road, I found the door apparently narrowed, and moved in obliquely. The idea then struck me, that I was becoming at least in appearance, a downy doctor myself; and from that time I never more made the downy doctors a subject of castigation. He acted wisely, finding it much more comfortable to himself, and more edifying to his hearers, to preach Christ, and let other things and other people alone."

Mr. Romaine, after he left the cure of St. Olave's, was morning preacher for near two years at St. Bartholomew the Great, near West Smithfield, and removed from thence to Westminster chapel, where he had the same office for six months, till the dean and chapter withdrew their patronage and protection from it, and refused him their nomination for a license to preach there. The place then fell into other hands, and Mr. Romaine, who was immovably attached to the established church, resigned that situation. Nor had he any stated employment in the church, excepting the lectureship of St. Dunstan's in the West, till he was chosen to the rectory of Blackfriars in 1764, to which, owing to a dispute about the election that was settled in the court of chancery, he was not admitted till the year 1766.

During the time in which he had no settled employment in the morning, he preached charity sermons in many churches in London—sermons, which had been the means not only of spreading the gospel, but of proving its efficacy; for whatever may be ignorantly said against it as inimical to good works, more good has been done by it, and larger collections produced by the preaching of it, than by all the mere essays upon charity put together. He preached often likewise at the Lock Hospital upon the first institution of that charity, and the building of the chapel. Being honoured also at Lambeth with the acquaintance of archbishop Secker, he generally assisted in the parish church upon the first day of the month, it being the custom of that venerable prelate constantly to attend and to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

In speaking of him as a preacher, we ought not to omit his frequent appear-

ances in that character before the university of Oxford. He printed some of his discourses delivered there, such as those upon the "Divine Legation of Moses," upon "Jephthah's Vow," upon the "Sure Foundation," and upon "the Lord our righteousness." This latter he sent to the press, as being the last which he was permitted to preach, the pulpit being refused him in consequence of it, and he published it with the following dedication to the vice chancellor:

"*To the Rev. Dr. Randolph, Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and President of Corpus Christi College.*

"When I delivered these discourses, I had no design to make them public; but I have been since compelled to it. I understand they gave great offence, especially to you, and I was in consequence thereof refused the university pulpit. In justice, not to myself, for I desire to be out of the question, but to the great doctrine here treated of, namely, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, as the only ground of our acceptance and justification before God the Father, I have sent to the press what was delivered from the pulpit. I leave the friends of our church to judge, whether there be any thing herein advanced contrary to the scriptures, and to the doctrines of the reformation. If not, I am safe. If there be, you are bound to make it appear. You have a good pen, and you have great leisure; make use of them; and I hope and pray you may make use of them for your good and mine.

"I am, with my constant and hearty prayers for the university's prosperity,

"Mr. Vice Chancellor,

"Your humble servant in Christ,

"William Romaine."

While there is nothing in these sermons that can impeach his character as a scholar, or as a divine, there is something in the dedication prefixed to them, that does him great honour as a gentleman and a Christian. Whatever reasons the university had for so stigmatizing a man, upon whose lips they had formerly hung, charmed by his eloquence, and edified by his doctrine, it is plain that he took the handsomest leave of them. He seems to have departed from them as the apostles did "from the presence of the council, which commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Acts v. 41, 42.

That Mr. Romaine neither committed mistakes, nor betrayed infirmities, is what no writer of his life will affirm: nor would any reader of it believe: this would be to affirm and believe that he was not a man. But of his steady and uniform attachment to the doctrines and discipline of the church of England, no doubt can be entertained. It was an attachment which yielded to no discouragements on the one hand, to no allurements on the other; for though preferment was withheld from him in England, it was held out to him in America, from whence the most pressing invitations were sent to him to accept of St. Paul's church in Philadelphia, with a salary of six hundred pounds a year; and these were seconded by the most urgent and repeated entreaties of his friend Mr. Whitefield, who considered him as persecuted in one city, and therefore clearly called to go unto another. But Mr. Romaine loved his church and his king; and though he felt and professed that affection for Mr. Whitefield which every lover of Jesus Christ must feel for so able and faithful a preacher of his name, so useful an instrument in the hand of God of reviving the doctrines of the reformation in this country, yet he never could agree with him in any mode of propagating the truth itself, which he thought inconsistent with the line of conduct prescribed to a clergyman. As to America, where episcopacy was never likely to be established, nor monarchy to be long endured, it was a soil by no means genial to him; he expected therefore little from being transplanted into it; and he lived to see many, who had fled to it, as a Utopia of religion and liberty, return with no small delight to old England again.

As a proof of his unalterable regard for this church and nation, he first printed in 1757, the year of his dismission from the university pulpit, "An Earnest Invitation to the Friends of the Established Church to join with several of their

Brethren, Clergy and Laity, in London. in setting apart one hour of every week for Prayer and Supplication during these troublesome Times." After having mentioned the motives and calls to prayer, he proceeds to the matter of it, and invites us to "pray for the peace of our established church, and for all orders and degrees of its ministers, beseeching God to give them his grace and heavenly benediction, that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth his glory, and set forward the salvation of all men. And to the end there may never be wanting such persons in the church, let us pray for all seminaries of Christian education, especially for the two universities," &c. As a proof of his good wishes to all Christian people, he adds, " May the God of love dispose us also to pray fervently for all the protestant dissenting congregations which love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. May he shed that love abroad in all our souls, which alone can effectually free us from party spirit," &c. This same tract he reprinted in the year 1779, and again in 1795, a few months before his death. And it is to be hoped that being dead, he will yet speak in it to many, and excite them to the practice of what he there recommends. If any additional arguments are wanting to enforce this good work upon Christians, besides those in this useful little tract, they are to be found in a sermon published at the same time with the first edition of it, entitled, " The Duty of Praying for others." It was printed indeed without a name, but bore such indubitable marks of Mr. Romaine's style and spirit, as to leave no doubt respecting its author, and indeed it may be ranked among the best of his writings.

That which he recommended to others, he practised himself, and found so much encouragement to pray always and not to faint, as to be induced a few years afterwards to send a circular letter to every serious clergyman, whom he knew, and whom he remembered at the throne of grace, inviting them to set apart one hour in the week for calling upon God; imploring his mercy upon the established church, that he would revive his work in it, and send forth more labourers into this part of his harvest. This letter will appear in the printed collection; but as it will bear a second and a third reading, as the subject is important in itself, and handled by Mr. Romaine in the choicest manner, as it is a true specimen of his zealous affection in a good thing, as well as of his particular love to this church and nation, as it shows his knowledge of himself, and contains much godly experience, which may be useful to others; it is here inserted as forming no inconsiderable part of his history; and may all the benefits that he wished, be the fruits of its publication.

My dear brother in our precious Jesus.—In the year 1756, a weekly hour of prayer was agreed upon by several religious clergy and laity, in order to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, till he should be pleased to put a stop to the calamities of that time. He did hear us, glory be to a prayer-hearing God, and he turned our supplications into praises. About that period it began to be laid very near my heart to pray earnestly and often for the prosperity of our Zion, for which I never fail to make intercession in all my addresses to the throne of grace. But once a week, on Friday, I have what is called the clergy's litany. In which, after general petitions for the out-pouring of the Spirit upon all the ministers of our church, I make mention by name of those my fellow-labourers, whom God has highly honoured in making them faithful and useful in the ministry. As I go over their names recommending them to the care, and their people to the blessing of our glorious Head, it is my custom to ask particularly for them, such things as I know or hear they want. Your name has been long in my list, and you owe me many, many prayers, a lawful debt, which now upon demand, I hope you will repay me. I ask it in justice due to myself. I entreat it for the glory of our common Lord, and for the advancement of his own cause and kingdom, and for your own soul's prosperity. O that I may write any thing to stir you up to pray till you as far outstrip me herein, as to make it a point of gratitude for me to pray more and more fervently for you. I will mention some of the motives which moved me to this practice, and some of the advantages which I have found in it, and I beg of the Lord to make them the means of inducing you to join with me in this delightful exercise of brotherly love.

1. One of the first things which put me upon it was the frequent use of the hour of prayer, mentioned above. We are called upon in scripture to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men; and we are very often exhorted to pray for the household of faith, and more particularly for the ministers of it, agreed together in this land to worship the same Lord in the same outward establishment, to which you and I are very closely connected, both in profession and principle. To us, as ministers, the command should be of great force—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."—This peace depends upon the Lord's sending and blessing his ambassadors of peace. They are his ministers, attending continually for this very thing. He raises them up; he fits them for the advancement of it; he prospers them for the sake of the prosperity of his church, as he says, "I will clothe the priests in Zion with salvation, and then her saints shall shout aloud for joy." For this reason we find St. Paul in all his epistles desiring to be prayed for—"Pray for us"—for grace, for gifts, for success. He puts the churches upon asking what their ministers wanted. Although God has promised it, yet he will be entreated for it. The prayer of faith never returns without a blessing, which I have remarked again and again to the praise of him who says, "Ask, and ye shall have," and this has been a

2. Second argument very powerful with me. The command given to pray for the peace of Jerusalem has a promise—"They shall prosper that love thee."—This has been fulfilled. I have seen manifest sensible answers to this prayer—clear displays of the faithfulness of the promise maker. He has vouchsafed to give the desired mercy—not for the merits of our prayers, but for the sake of his own great Name. He put it into our hearts to see what his church wanted: to ask the supply of him, and now having received it, to ascribe all the glory to his grace—"Worthy is the Lamb." His kindness hitherto is a mighty encouragement to go on, and is a

3. Motive for me to persevere, and for you to join with me. He says when the work is great and the ministers but few—"Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest field." This was our warrant to ask, and asking in faith according to his will, we had confidence in him that he would hear and answer; and he has been as good as his word; we have tried it, and found it cannot be broken. For these last eleven years we have been praying for more labourers, and every year he has sent forth some more O that he may give the word, and greater still may be the company of the preachers. Have we not all the reason in the world to expect it? The promise stands sure—his hand is not shortened—his love is not abated—prayer has not lost its efficacy with him to engage his love and power to fulfil the promise. Doubtless more, more labourers shall be sent out, if more of us join in fervent prayers, nothing wavering. While we continue to pray, he will continue to answer. This is fixed as the throne of God—"I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail." O how has my dependence on his unalterable word been strengthened, by seeing it so constantly fulfilled; and how has my attachment increased to our established church, by his raising up more ministers among us! Indeed he owns our establishment at this day; and thereby he encourages us to pray on; and if we do, we may hope to see greater things than these. May you and I find reason to be asking the enlargement of Christ's kingdom in our land, until he remove us into his kingdom of praise.

4. These arguments are continually enforced by the constraining love of Jesus, which keeps the soul in a good frame to pray for the advancement of his honour and glory. While I find a warm heart to him, I cannot help wishing that others may be won over to the love of him. To set him forth, that they may behold his matchless glory, is our office. Every gospel minister is raised up to sound aloud the praises of the wonderful person, and of the infinitely perfect work of the divine Saviour, in whom all the perfections of the Godhead shine out in the richest display of their beauty, love, and power. The gospel-ministry was ordained for this purpose, and it is blessed to this day to the hearts of poor sinners, by bringing them to see, to admire, and to enjoy the love of the Father through the salvation of the Son, by the grace of the Spirit. This is the ministration, which exceedeth in glory. O what an honour is it that we should be called to

partake of these blessings ourselves, and that by our means the Lord would, and does, convey them to our people. The sense of this is constraining. Under the influence of it we cannot but pray for his ministers, that they may spread his gospel and advance his fame. O, for more love to this precious Jesus! and to his cause in your heart; it will be as a thousand arguments to put you upon praying for an increase of labourers, and an increase of usefulness in those he has already sent out: and, if you do pray thus, and continue to pray, it will be the most likely means of your experiencing more of his love, for he cannot alter the word that is gone out of his mouth. His promise to them that pray for the peace of Jerusalem is, "They shall prosper who love thee," which is a

Fifth encouragement. It is good for our own souls. They prosper by it: while we are concerned for the honour of Jesus, for the advancement of his gospel, we are taking the best care we can of our own interest. The soul that watereth others, shall be watered itself; so it prospers. The prayer for blessings on our fellow-labourers brings a shower of blessings into our own bosom. I should be very unthankful, yea, beyond measure, if I did not acknowledge it. I have not prayed in vain for these eleven years. No. I have indeed prospered, and have received many mercies; some I will mention, not to set myself up for any thing, who am the very sink of hell, and feel in me to this moment indwelling corruptions enough to damn a thousand worlds; but I mention them to the glory of sovereign grace. There is in every one of us a desire to be great and esteemed, a bitter root of pride, which works in abundance of vile tempers, all dishonourable to Jesus and hurtful to our own souls; I have found this praying for my dear brethren, and always by name, has given many a blow at that bitter root, and has checked several of its branches, such as envy at their success, shyness to their persons, an evil eye at their gifts or their graces. That party spirit, under the bondage of which, no one ever laboured more than myself, has been in a good degree conquered; and so has the unwillingness to bear reproof, very hard to bear; and the will given to be thought less than the least, the sole work of almighty grace. And I ascribe it to my constantly praying for God's ministers, that he has enabled me in any degree not only to get the better of those vile tempers, but also to grow in brotherly love. I find my heart knit to those I never saw, and am glad of their prosperity in mind, body, or estate. My very soul rejoices in any good in them, or good done by them. Their present number (may the Lord add to them an hundred fold,) their being almost of one mind, and of one heart, their growth in grace, their usefulness among their own people, and their writings for the public benefit; these are become sweet subjects of thankfulness. My prayers are more in faith because I reap the fruit of them, and can join praise with them. To every petition I can say, thanks be to the Lord; I have good encouragement to pray on. Every year I see our Jerusalem prosper, and they also prosper that love it. Are not these advantages, and are they not sufficient to induce you to join your prayers with mine? As for me, God forbid, my dear brother, that I should cease to pray for you.—May the Lord the Spirit put it into your heart to pray for me, and for the rest of our fellow-labourers, until you find more advantages from your prayers than I have done. If you weigh these things with attention and God incline you to join us in prayer, there is a scripture which warrants this, and which contains some gracious promises to the practice of it; the consideration of it has been with me a

Sixth motive. It is in Matt. xviii. 19, 20. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth."—We do agree to meet together in one place.—Where is there a better than the throne of grace? We do agree touching the thing we are to ask, namely, the blessing of him that sitteth upon the throne on his own ministers. What can be more pleasing to him, than to wish them well, to whom he has done so well, as to call them to, fit them for, and prosper them in his work? O it is not to be described nor conceived, how his heart is set upon this. To send out ministers to promote his glory through the salvation of his people, is the ruling affection in the head of the church; and when he intends to send them out, he gives his people the spirit of prayer, to desire of him pastors after his own heart; and to encourage them to ask, he promises, "Whatsoever ye ask, shall be done for you of my Father, who is in heaven: for the Father him-

self loveth you, and will give you whatsoever you ask in my name: and when any two of you agree to pray for more labourers, or for greater usefulness in them who do labour in the word and doctrine, I will then be in the midst of you, spiritually present, that you may have communion with me in prayer, and that you may be satisfied I do hear, and will answer." How inviting, how persuasive are these words! surely they ought powerfully to influence you and me. What may we not expect from meeting often in the presence of Jesus? Try, my dear brother. Be much in his company, and see what will come of it. Your heart will certainly be more knit to him, and he will knit you closer to his other ministers in the unity of the Spirit. He will bring us to be of the same mind in the Lord. This is as the three-fold cord which is not quickly broken, because it is a bond of the Lord's own making, and of the Lord's own keeping. He maintains it, and he ties it closer by giving us sweet fellowship in one another's prayers, and by enabling us to act and live, according as we pray for the good of our brethren. Thus he makes it appear that we are taught of God to love one another, for he only can teach us to love unfeignedly, and with a pure heart fervently. This is the most blessed union upon earth, because it flows from our being one with Christ, and proves that we hold the head, and are under him as living members in his body united together, having the same care one for another.—Hereby we know what the communion of saints is—we experience, and we rejoice in its blessings. O how will this strengthen the hands of each other—it will make us mighty through our God to do our work, to endure hardship, to fight our battles; yea, to the many antichrists of this our day, we shall become terrible, like an army with banners. May the Lord make you a good soldier in this noble army; and he will, if you will join with us. Your prayers will not return void into your own bosom. No, no. Every prayer for your brethren will bring down a blessing upon yourself, and you will find more arguments daily than I have room to mention. Only one thing more I must take notice of, which is my

Seventh motive, namely, the present necessity. Look round the island—examine the state of it. You cannot help seeing how things are going on. The prospect is alarming. Our national sins had been long crying aloud for vengeance, but the long-suffering of our God has withheld it; and to leave us, a people without excuse, he sent mercy instead of judgment. He revived his work—raised up ministers—sent them in his name to proclaim his grace in Jesus, and to call sinners to repentance. What has been the effect? O guilt, beyond that of Sodom and Gomorrah! The gospel is rejected. This one sin is filling up the measure of our iniquity fast. Judgment slumbereth not. It is abroad. The storm is gathering. A dark black cloud is hanging over us. It has not burst yet, but God knows how soon it may. If it should, what have we not to fear? The scripture character of the latter days is now fulfilled. We are in the dregs of time. The damnable heresies, as foretold, are brought in. Atheism, infidelity, and their poisonous fruits, harbingers of the great day, do abound, and security marks it to be near at hand. Thanks be to God there is a little light breaking through this dismal cloud, which affords us a ray of hope. Jesus has not left himself without witness. He has still a cause, and ministers to plead it, in our land. But how few are they! Blessed be God for any. He, who sent them, can send more, and he bids us pray for more. What he bids, the times press and enforce upon us. When was there, when can there be, greater need? Does not every thing precious in time and in eternity call upon us to pray for one another, and to pray, that the Lord may add to our number daily? Is not his glory blasphemed openly, his mercy abused, his gospel rejected, and therefore are not public and private virtues neglected, yea, despised? What can stop the deserved ruin? Only God, and he only in the way of his own appointment. The gospel is his saving ordinance, and ministers are the means which he uses to make the gospel the power of God unto salvation. O let us pray then for more of them. To this let the love of dear Jesus constrain us—the love of our king—and of our country—the love of our religious and civil liberties—the love of our families and children—the love of our own souls, and of our parishioners. O that God may put it into your heart by these, or any other motives, to join with us in praying him to send forth more labourers

into his harvest. Amen, Amen, say I. Let all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity say, Amen.

My dear brother, if God should incline your heart to this work and labour of love, there are two things earnestly recommended to you; the

First is to meet us at a set hour; that we may agree in our joint prayers, and may have the divine promise to depend upon for the blessing we ask. We have for some time met every Friday at noon, but it has been found inconvenient; and by consent it is now fixed from nine o'clock on Friday morning to ten. You will then meet a great deal of good company at our court—several dear ministers and fellow-labourers round the throne, besieging it with their prayers for each other, and for the increase of their number. Whatever be the general issue, it will be well with us supplicants. Our labour will not be in vain in the Lord. If our prayers do not remove the affliction of Joseph, yet we, grieving for it, have a promise of safety, when that affliction comes to be destructive, as you may read at large in Ezekiel, chap. ix. A

Second thing is desired of you, namely, that you would pray for the brethren by name. This is not a trifling matter. Indeed it is not. Make trial of it, and you will find more advantages in it than I have mentioned above. It has been exceeding profitable to my own soul for several years, and I doubt not but experience will make it so to yours.

I leave all that I have said in the Lord's hand, that he may apply it to you, as seemeth him good. Whether you join with us or not, I will not cease to pray for you and yours, that the work of the Lord may prosper in you and by you. Only remember the time is short. The work is great. The Lord God bless you in it, that his harvest may be got in soon, and his labourers may go to rest. In this happy number may you and I be found. When our prayers are over may we continue our praises to Father, Son, and Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, to whom we shall be giving equal glory, worship, and thanks, through a long blessed sabbath. Hallelujah. Amen

Such an epistle will bear, and indeed it requires, frequent reading. The business recommended in it should not be forgotten. A list might be circulated every year of such as call upon the Lord in every place, and labour in his word and doctrine. To their names might be added any particular circumstances, which call for praise or prayer. And an hour or more, might be well spent in making mention of each severally before God, without vain repetitions. An anniversary sermon might be preached, giving a short account of the progress of the gospel in the kingdom, and published, as a history of the church, for the benefit of the present and future generations. It was Mr. Romaine's custom to preach a sermon of this sort every year upon the second day of March, being the day of his election to the living of Blackfriars. "In one of these discourses he mentioned that himself and three others agreed to spend one hour in the week, at a stated time, in prayer for the revival of the power of godliness in the established church."* What an increase did he live to see! from units to hundreds! And what encouragement did he hold out to the ministers and people of God, to devote a small portion of their time to prayer, supplication, intercession, and giving of thanks, for the extension of the kingdom of Jesus Christ! for the revival of that work of the Lord which shall stand for ever in a people whom he forms for himself, and of whom it may be observed, that in proportion as they are formed for the Lord in the next world, they are formed for good in the present one; the increase of them therefore is a great public concern.

We have now followed the object of these memoirs through some of the changes and chances of this mortal life, as well as through some of the trials and tribulations of the Christian life, to his final settlement as to this world in the rectory of St. Andrew Wardrobe, and St. Ann's, Blackfriars. Nor were the leadings of Providence less wonderful in this circumstance of his life, than they had been in most of the preceding ones. The right of presentation to this

* See Memoir of the late Rev. William Romaine, in the Evangelical Magazine for November, 1795, p. 449.

living is vested in the crown and in the parishioners alternately. Mr. Romaine's predecessor was Mr. Henley, a nephew of the then Lord Chancellor Henley. He enjoyed this preferment only about six years and a half, and died young, of a putrid fever, in consequence of visiting one of his parishioners in that disorder. He was a man of an excellent spirit, and of great piety, and promised to be very useful in the church; but it pleased God to remove him, and to incline the hearts of some in the parish, upon his decease, to propose Mr. Romaine as his successor. This was done without Mr. Romaine's knowledge or consent: the first intimation which he received of it was from a newspaper, which he took up by accident, when upon a journey. His friends, who first started the idea of nominating him as a candidate for the living, entertained little or no hopes of success; but, upon sounding their fellow parishioners, they found that at least two-thirds of them were in his favour. In order to check their progress, a rumour was spread that he was above soliciting their votes and interest. But upon the day being fixed for each candidate to preach his probation sermon, Mr. Romaine was apprized of it, came immediately to London, and made his appearance among them. The day appointed for his preaching was the 30th of September, 1764, upon which occasion many absented themselves who had been in the habit of hearing him, lest they should crowd the church, and occupy the seats of the inhabitants; and, by giving them offence, throw obstacles in the way of his election. The sermon, which he preached upon this occasion, does him infinite honour as a Christian preacher, and an honest man. It contains truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as it is in Jesus, with a very plain and close application of it to each particular hearer. He thought fit to assign his reasons in it for not having behaved towards them in the common way of soliciting their favour. "Some have insinuated that it was from pride that I would not go about the parish from house to house, canvassing for votes; but truly it was another motive, I could not see how this could promote the glory of God. How can it be for the honour of Jesus, that his ministers, who have renounced fame, riches, and ease, should be most anxious and earnest in the pursuit of those very things which they have renounced? Surely this would be getting into a worldly spirit, as much as the spirit of parliamenteering. And as this method of canvassing cannot be for Jesus' sake, so neither is it for our honour: it is far beneath our function: nor is it for your profit. What good is it to your souls? What compliment to your understandings? What advantage to you in any shape, to be directed and applied to by every person, with whom you have any connexion, or on whom you have any dependence? Is not this depriving you of the freedom of your choice? Determined by these motives, when my friends of their own accord put me up as a candidate, to whom I have to this hour made no application, directly or indirectly, I left you to yourselves. If you choose me, I desire to be your servant for Jesus' sake; and if you do not, the will of the Lord be done."

This sermon operated greatly in his favour; it was well received by the parishioners, and published at their request.

There were two other candidates for the living besides himself, and a scrutiny was demanded in favour of each at the close of the first day's poll. This scrutiny was entered into, but produced no decision, the proper qualifications not being settled which entitled an inhabitant to vote at the election of a rector. A second election was agreed upon by the friends of the several candidates, which ended in favour of Mr. Romaine, who had a great majority of votes, and was declared duly elected. But this did not satisfy the other candidates; each put in his claim, and the business was transferred into the court of chancery. It continued there for more than a year, and, in the end of January, or beginning of February, 1766, a decree was given by Lord Chancellor Henley, in favour of Mr. Romaine. He was instituted and inducted accordingly, but was observed to tremble much during the whole ceremony of his admission. His feelings have been expressed by himself in a letter which he wrote upon the decision in chancery. "My friends are rejoicing all around me, and wishing me that joy which I cannot take. It is my Master's will, and I submit. He knows what is best both for his own glory, and his people's good; and I am certain he

makes no mistakes in either of these points, but my head hangs down upon the occasion, through the awful apprehensions which I ever had of the care of souls. I am frightened to think of watching over two or three thousand when it is work enough to watch over one. The plague of my own heart almost wearies me to death; what can I do with so vast a number?"

Such were the methods by which he obtained the living of Blackfriars, and such the views with which he entered upon it. His aims were directed to the glory of God, the profit of his parishioners, and the edification of the church in general. They cannot be better represented than they have been by himself in two letters kindly communicated by a respectable clergyman, to whom he gave a title for orders the year after his admission to the church of Blackfriars. As these letters are not to make a part of the printed collection, they are here rescued from oblivion; and such parts of them produced, as express the writer's ideas of his own situation, as well as of the duties incumbent upon a person who is offering himself a candidate for holy orders. The expressions alluded to are the following:—"In this whole affair I have desired simply to follow what was right, and to aim at the divine glory; and if I know my own heart, (which is not easily known) my eye is single in your coming to me. I desire your good, and not mine own; your being with me may be the means of much edification to your own soul, and may tend greatly to your future usefulness. I would have my church a nursery, where such as you may grow, till you are fit to be planted out, and when fit, I would not keep you a day, but rather use my interest to provide some preferment for you. This is my plan, my title, and my pulpit, and what I have in consequence of the Lord's sending me to Blackfriars. I have them for the Lord, and I beg grace of him that I may employ them so as shall be most for his glory. I shall receive you on this footing when you come. May the Lord the Spirit unite your heart to me as mine is to you, and may we be taught of God to love one another.

"I hope you will not forget me in your addresses to the throne of grace, and if I may give my advice, it is needful for you at present to be much in prayer for these graces:

"First, For the right knowledge of yourself—your vileness.

"Secondly, For the right knowledge of Jesus—his glory.

"Thirdly, For a single eye to his glory in your taking upon you to be his minister and servant in holy things.

"Fourthly, For a love to souls; when you know much of his love in saving your soul, that will make you labour much for Jesus, in trying to set forward the salvation of others. And,

"Lastly, You should beg of God, and be always begging as long as you live, for an entire dependence upon the Lord to bless you in his work. We toil all night and day, and catch nothing, till the Lord bless the gospel net. The Lord bless it in you and by you, so prays your real friend and servant,

"WILLIAM ROMAINE.

"Lambeth, August 4th, 1767."

This same gentleman expected to have been ordained upon Trinity Sunday, but was disappointed. He gained by this loss a second letter from his friend Mr. Romaine, equally expressive with the first of his views of the Christian ministry.

"*Dear Mr.* ——. It was not without good reason that the Lord would not suffer you to be ordained last Trinity. He had much to teach you in these months, and I hope you have been a good scholar. He wanted to teach you your absolute unfitness for the work of the ministry, and thereby to bring you to an entire dependence upon him. You cannot love the work, nor be successful in it, nor, upon succeeding, give Him all the glory, but through his grace. He laid you by a little to make you more perfect in this lesson. It is very hard to learn, for I am still at it every day, and get but little ground. Self, proud self, is such a dull scholar, and has such a bad memory, that though I am satisfied to-day Christ must do all for me, and all in me, and all by me too, yet I soon forget, and soon want to be something in the work myself; but I do know,

and blessed be the name of Jesus, I do experience that his grace is sufficient for me chiefly in the pulling down of my pride, and in making me willing to be nothing, that Christ may be ALL. May he pour out upon you and me more of his Spirit to lay self very low, and to exalt the Saviour."

These letters speak for themselves, being the language of a person who had determined to know nothing among his people, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. A determination which being generally made in the Spirit, is generally pursued with steadiness; at least it was in the instance before us unto the end of his life.

He entered upon his living not only in the faith and patience of Jesus Christ, but also with a decided preference to the church of England, in which he was called to preach his name. He therefore adhered to her discipline, and explained her doctrines, with a view to enforce upon his hearers conformity to both, and a regular continuance in her communion. In pursuance of this plan, he declared his intention of preaching a course of sermons upon the thirty-nine articles of religion, and in the process of this service he received from his parishioners the following petition:

"*To the Rev. William Romaine, Rector of the united parishes of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe, and St. Ann, Blackfriars.*

"*Reverend Sir,* As you have been pleased to intimate an intention of preaching a course of sermons upon the thirty-nine articles of the church of England, and have actually proceeded in a manner that has given general satisfaction—We, the churchwardens, parishioners, and inhabitants of the above-mentioned parishes, whose names are hereunto subscribed, reflecting how many Christians are unhappily deprived of reaping any benefit from them, owing to their being confined within the narrow limits of a single church, do, for the interest of religion in general, and for our benefit in particular, join in requesting you (if agreeable to yourself) to print and publish the same; and we are the more prompted to make this request, as we are informed that there is no work of the kind now extant.

John Whinn	William Trickets	John Wilkinson
Roger Butcher	John Holton	John Righton
Thomas Hunter, Sen.	Henry Collins	John Hore
James Hudson	John Biddle	Richard Hudson
William Slade	Ann Wells	M. Ramsay
John Edrington	R. Packer	John Griffiths
Harman Samler	I. Hutchins	Os. Olney
Richard Smedley	William Cock	W. Box
Thomas Hunter, Jun.	Henry Adlidge	John Mullis
Ann Rodbard	William Montague	Samuel Thomas."

This petition was found among Mr. Romaine's papers, but the request contained in it was not complied with.

Nor was he less attentive to the temporal than to the spiritual concerns of his situation. He found the parsonage-house wholly unfit for the residence of a pastor, it having been turned unto warehouses, and being wholly out of repair. He took down the old premises, and built a handsome rectory-house close to the church, for himself and his posterity. The church also when he took possession of the living, was surrounded with a dead wall, and the avenues leading to it very narrow. His parishioners, with whom he lived from the first in peace and harmony, were prevailed upon to repair the church, and to erect a gallery at the west end of it for the accommodation of his numerous hearers, to pull down the high wall that inclosed it, so as to give it light and air, and to make all the avenues to it wide and commodious; by which means it is become one of the tbest places of worship in London. Mr. Romaine, who never asked any favour for himself, but always acknowledged the smallest, solicited his friends that attended the church to present the united parishes with a token of their gratitude. This request was cheerfully complied with, and the sum collected towards defraying the expenses of erecting the gallery, and other improvements amounted

to five hundred pounds, which the parishes have handsomely acknowledged by an inscription over the west door.*

Whilst he promoted the improvement of the Lord's house, he laboured much to obtain decent behaviour in those who came there to worship. He too justly complained of that which with all his influence he was scarce able to remedy, the disgusting and irreverent custom of coming into church during the time of service—as if confession of sin—the praises of God in his own psalms—the reading of his will in his own word—and prayers founded upon the scriptures, and extracted from them, were a mere nothing: or as if we were to assemble ourselves together for no other purpose than just to hear a sermon. Whatever excuses may be made for such conduct upon a week-day, none can be made for it upon the Lord's day, the great business of which is his public worship, and of course our gathering together in places where he has chosen to put his name. If our place of residence is at a distance from our place of worship, we should act in this case as we do in every other, and consider that the further we have to go, the sooner we should set out. If we are to go to market, or on a journey, or on any worldly business or pleasure, we can rise, we can dress, we can set out in time, and think an apology necessary if we are not punctual: but, as to church, it seems a matter of perfect indifference, when we go, or whether we go there at all. But why are we more diligent in things which are temporal, than in those which are eternal? Why do we presume to insult the Creator, in a way in which we would not insult a fellow-creature? How can we expect a blessing from one part of the service, when we have despised and neglected the other; or indeed, how can we expect a blessing from any part, unless we have seriously and devoutly attended the whole?

There is also another custom too prevalent in and about places of public worship, which was peculiarly offensive to Mr. Romaine, and which was often reproved by him in more ways than one. The custom alluded to is that of people's conversing together either in the church, or churchyard, in a vestry, or in a board-room, as soon as the service is over. He not only spoke against such conversations from the pulpit, but frequently interrupted them, when he came out, by tapping the shoulders of those who were engaged in them; and once, if not oftener, by knocking their heads together, when he found them particularly close, and whispering in their ears, that they had forgot the "parable of the sower." He himself studiously avoided every thing of the kind, being always in church some time before service began, and retiring from it to his own house as soon as the service was over, without ever speaking a word, except to his curate, his clerk, or parish officers, upon necessary business in the vestry. A woman, it is said, once saluted him, as he came down the pulpit stairs, by telling him, that "he had been greater that night than ever." And he answered her by saying, that "the devil had told him so before he left the pulpit." If Mr. Romaine uttered these words, he took them out of the mouth of the celebrated John Bunyan, who is supposed to have been their original author, and to have uttered them upon a similar occasion. The zeal of the good woman, which provoked this saying, seems to have been somewhat like that of another in the company of our Lord, who cried out to him, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." And the answer of the servants might have been given in the spirit of their Master, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."† These certainly are the

* This church was repaired and beautified anno domini 1774, at the expense of the united parishes, and the generous contribution of the congregation.

The Rev. William Romaine, M.A. Rector

of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe.	of St. Ann's, Blackfriars.
Charles Griffiths	John Holton
Thomas Cook	John Davis

Churchwardens.

Love as Brethren.

† We cannot but admire the meekness and gentleness of Christ, as they were entirely free from that roughness and severity which often cleave to the expressions of the best

great ends for which we assemble together, and were they kept always in view, they would regulate our behaviour in the use of the means which lead to them.

Mr. Romaine was a great benefactor to his parishes in another respect, and that is, as a promoter of charity. There was seldom any occasion of distress on which he did not call upon his hearers to contribute to the relief of the sufferers; and the sum raised was generally proportionate to the motive urged, *viz.* the love of Christ constraining himself and those that heard him. The annual collections for the schools in the ward, and the poor of the parish, made in the church, at the weekly sacraments, which he instituted, and after the charity sermons, which he preached, amounted on an average to three hundred pounds a year. On his first coming to the living the pew-openers employed in the church were two in number; when he died, they were increased to eight, and each capable of getting a comfortable livelihood from what was given them by the congregation, without any assistance from the parish. When the dreadful fire happened in Blackfriars in the year 1793, by which a number of houses were consumed that had a poor family in each story, Mr. Romaine was an eye-witness to the distressing scene. He called upon one of his parishioners at half-past three in the morning during the time of the fire, and again at nine o'clock, anxious to know what could be done for the poor sufferers. He commissioned his friend to give them something for their immediate relief; and accordingly two guineas were given to each sufferer, to the amount of about ninety guineas in the whole. Mr. Romaine made himself responsible for this sum, and on the mornings of the Sunday and Tuesday following he pleaded from the pulpit for his poor parishioners, who had been burnt out of their houses, and lost their all. The sum raised upon this occasion, added to a donation of fifty pounds from his royal highness the Duke of York, amounted to upwards of three hundred pounds, which, together with a collection made by the inhabitants of Ludgate-hill, enabled Mr. Romaine to distribute to the poor sufferers from ten to eighteen pounds a piece. He was no less zealous for every good work which came in his way. When the clergy were called upon to collect in their respective parishes for the French emigrants, he was not a whit behind the chiefest of them in this business; for which he had the honour of being noticed in an anonymous pamphlet; as if to relieve the distresses of a papist were to encourage the errors of popery. We may surely, and ought to separate the mistakes from the miseries of any man; not perhaps as causes and effects, but as to their respective influences upon our minds. We may be guarded against the one, without being hardened against the other. We may remember how the papists persecuted us in times past, but we have protested against them to very little purpose, unless we have learned to "love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us." And I cannot but think, that the asylum afforded them in this country, in their present distress, is to be ranked among the many acts of benevolence which reflect infinite honour upon the English nation.

There are also many of the public charities which have lost a great friend and benefactor in Mr. Romaine. None will miss him more than the Royal Humane Society. From a conviction of the uscfulness of this institution, he preached a voluntary sermon for them at Blackfriars, in the year 1777. He observed that not only the lives, but the souls of some of his parishioners had been saved by the means of it; that their miraculous recovery made them serious; that their seriousness brought them to church; that the Lord of the church met them there, and gave them the spirit of faith while they were hearing of his name. Mr. Romaine preached annually for this society for seventeen years, latterly at St. Dunstan's on the Sunday after his course of lectures was ended, and his sermon generally procured thirty pounds, besides two or three new annual subscribers.*

Christians. He does not treat this woman, as though she was a messenger of Satan, sent either to flatter or to buffet him, but advises her to get more from his company than a mere transient impression, which might be soon effaced without producing its effects in her religious conduct.

* These anecdotes were communicated by Dr. Hawes, register of the Humane Society.

There is also another pious institution which has reason to regret in him the loss of a valuable friend; an institution known by the name of the Bible Society, for the purpose of distributing bibles amongst his Majesty's forces, both sea and land. Much good has been done by it, and Mr. Romaine had it much at heart; he preached for it in his own and other churches in London, and in different places in the country, during his summer excursions, by which means he was a great benefactor to it every year. I am sorry to hear that it has been on the decline, and involved in debt; but it is to be hoped that God will raise up advocates to plead its cause, and that there will be a revival of so good a work, at a time when we not only want soldiers and sailors, but when we want them to fight in the cause of God and truth, against the most daring spirit of error and innovation that was ever yet in the world.

The life of Mr. Romaine upon earth was the course of a man who pursued the even tenor of his way in the service of Christ, and in the ministry of the church of England. It had little or no concern with the men, the politics, or the fashions of this present evil world; it had therefore no great variety as to its outward appearances among men, except in his removals from one situation to another, till he was established first in the lectureship of St. Dunstan's, and afterwards in the living of Blackfriars. These were the theatres in which he acted his part, and exerted his talents to the glory of God, and the good of men. His time then was most regularly disposed of. He resided in London, or near it, from the commencement of the law-term in November, until the long vacation after Trinity-term, when he generally set out upon a summer excursion, which was always into the north as long as his mother lived, and afterwards chiefly into the west of England; where he had many friends, who were always refreshed by his company, and many churches open to him, which were always benefited by his preaching. He seldom passed a silent sabbath, and never by his own inclination; being desirous, as he expressed it, to say a word for his Master in every place. His Bible was his companion both in travel and at home, and regularly read through every year. He lived more with God than with men, and in order to know his real history, or the best part of it, it would be requisite to know what passed between God and his own soul. Much of this has been brought to light in his "Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith;" and more will appear in his private letters, which are now collecting for the public view, and which are to be received as the effusions of a good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and as a little history of heaven upon earth.

He was a man naturally close and reserved, irritable to a certain degree, short and quick in his replies, but frequently mistaken as being rude and morose, where he meant nothing of the kind. Had he paid more attention than he did to the various distresses of soul and body, which were brought before him, he could have had no time left for reading, for meditation, for doctrine, for prayer, and, in short, for what every man must attend to in private who would be useful in public. It was not uncommon for him to tell those who came to him with cases of conscience, and questions of spiritual concern, that he said all that he had to say in the pulpit. These people might be hurt for the moment by such a dismission, but they had only to attend upon his preaching the next opportunity, and they found that their difficulties had impressed him as well as themselves, that they had been submitted to God, and been the subjects of his very serious and affectionate consideration. This circumstance contributed much to make his sermons particularly useful; as they were first explanations of the text, and then particular and personal applications of it to the case and condition of every hearer. They were, without appearing to be, studied discourses; not aiming at excellency of speech or wisdom, but at that manifestation of the truth by which he might commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Not that he shunned conversation in its place and season, and the mutual intercourses of a steady and constant friendship, which he kept up with many for a series of years. In company he was polite, affable, and instructive, without

wishing them to be made public, and thinking very justly, that it reflects no small honour upon an institution which he has so much at heart, to have had its cause pleaded by so good a man as Mr. Romaine.

affectation; and in domestic life, where the tempers of most men are tried and discovered, he had none superior to him as a master, a father, and a husband. So that he was a man who improved upon acquaintance, and they who knew him best were they who most respected him.

As a family man he had his comforts and his trials. Of the latter none more severe than the loss of his second son, who died in the East Indies, of which event he received the following account in a letter from his commanding officer.

"Sir,—It gives me great concern to be under the disagreeable necessity of communicating to you a melancholy event, in which you are nearly interested. Captain Romaine was seized about a fortnight ago with a disorder in his bowels, which terminated in a flux. I am sorry to add that the consequences have been fatal to him. Every attention has been paid to his memory which our situation permitted. I will not add to the distress which this misfortune must occasion, by describing how much he was beloved, and how much was expected from him by every person in the regiment.

'I have the honour to be
"Sir,
"Your most obedient and very
"Faithful servant, &c.
"Trincomaley, June 4, 1782." ——."

He received this letter upon a Thursday, and being much affected with it, was pressed by Mrs. Romaine not to go to St. Dunstan's that evening; but he answered that he must not leave his Master's concerns unattended to on that account, and he went and preached as usual.

In nothing was Mr. Romaine more to be admired than in the management of his time. His hour of breakfast was six in the morning, of dinner half-past one at noon, and of supper seven in the evening. His family were assembled to prayer at nine o'clock in the morning, and at the same hour at night. His particular friends were admitted occasionally to his morning service, and found it a most profitable and precious occasion: for his previous meditations had been upon the Lord's word; his Hebrew psalter was his constant companion at breakfast, and he has been often heard to say, how much his first repast was sanctified by the word of God and prayer. From ten o'clock to one he was generally employed in visiting the sick and his friends: he retired to his study after dinner, and sometimes resumed the exercise of walking, which he deferred till after supper, in the height of summer. After the evening service in his family he retired again to his study, and to his bed at the hour of ten. From this mode of living he never deviated, except when he was a guest in the houses of his friends, and then he breakfasted at seven, dined at two, and supped at eight. His adherence to rule in this respect was never more strongly marked than in a circumstance which befel him during the last years of his life. He was invited by a great dignitary in the church to dine with him at five o'clock; he felt respect for that person, and wished to show it; instead therefore of sending a written apology, he waited upon him himself, thanked him for his invitation, and excused himself by pleading his long habits of early hours, his great age, and often infirmities. Here was plain truth united, as it may be, with polished manners: it rendered honour to whom honour was due, and it supported the character of a man who walked by the same rule, who minded the same thing, and who lived the life that he now lived in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God.

Mr. Romaine derived many advantages from this regular disposition of his time: he redeemed it from many idle visits, much vain conversation, and from all conformity to the world. His plan of life precluded all these things, and great must have been his gain in a pilgrimage of fourscore years. His chief arts of health were rule and temperance, and they were the means of preserving to the end of his days the soundness of his mind, the health of his body, and the prosperity of his soul.

His natural temper, like that of most other people, might have given him

plague enough ; but it was subject to divine grace, and therefore furnished him with matter of praise as well as humiliation. In his latter years it was scarce discoverable ; and whatever defects of it had appeared in the former parts of his life, he was not backward to acknowledge them. One proof of this may supply the place of many—the anecdote is authentic—it may be useful to many—it can be offensive to none ; for it reflects no little honour on the parties concerned in it, of whom our departed friend was one, and a dissenting minister, now alive, the other. This minister had often attended Mr. Romaine's lectures at St. Dunstan's, till hearing some very severe things thrown out against the dissenters, and which he thought not justifiable, he determined to wait upon Mr. Romaine for an explanation. He did so accordingly ; and having made his observations and complaints, Mr. Romaine replied, "I do not want to have any thing to say to you, sir."—"If you will hear me, sir," added the other, "I will tell you my name ; I must, sir, acquaint you with my profession, I am a Protestant dissenting minister."—"Sir," said Mr. Romaine, "I neither wish to know your name nor your profession." Upon which Mr. Towle (who is the gentleman here alluded to) bowed, and took his leave. Some time after Mr. Romaine, to the great surprise of his hearer and reprover, returned his visit, and after the usual salutation,—"Well, Mr. Towle, I am not come to renounce my principles, I have not changed my sentiments, I will not give up my preference to the church of England, &c. ; but I am come as a Christian to make some apology. I think my behaviour to you, sir, the other day, was not becoming, nor such as it should have been," &c. They then shook hands, and parted good friends. The substance of this relation, when it was made to me, I immediately communicated to the surviving party concerned in it, requesting to know the truth of it, with any additional circumstances he might recollect, as well as his permission to make it public. The following is part of his very handsome answer to my letter. "Without any hesitation, and with the greatest cheerfulness, would I instantly comply with your request, but really, sir, it is not in my power. I cannot recollect the particular circumstances of the affair you refer to, or the particular expressions used by Mr. Romaine and myself in our first interview, or afterwards by Mr. Romaine when he called on me. So far do I remember the substance of what passed both at his house and mine, that I am certain the account given in your letter contains the general outlines of the whole matter. Although at the close of the last conversation Mr. Romaine and I positively disavowed the least idea of renouncing our respective principles, or being indifferent towards them ; united in our abhorrence of that temporising which is too fashionable in our day, each expressed a sincere esteem for the other, a friendly intercourse was kept up between him and myself to the day of his death, and I have not the smallest suspicion but that, as long as I live, I shall remember him with veneration, as an eminently consistent and respectable character."

This testimony is true, and worth a thousand stories ; it neither discredits the pen of the survivor, nor the memory of the deceased ; nor ought it to be without its use to the reader. We are prone to judge others, though we can seldom do it without condemning ourselves ; and if we are partakers with one another in faults and infirmities, we shall do well to be followers of those who have shewed a consciousness, and made confession of them.

Among other friends and admirers of Mr. Romaine, was the unhappy Dr. Dodd. When he began the world he was a zealous favourer of Hebrew learning, and distinguished himself as a preacher. From a professed similitude in studies and principles, he cultivated an acquaintance with Mr. Romaine ; but when he forsook such companions, having loved this present world, he told Mr. Romaine that he should be glad to see him at his house, but hoped not to be acknowledged by him, if they should happen to meet in public company. All intercourse therefore ceased between them, till the love of the world, and the things that are in it, brought its victim to prison. At this time a particular friend of Dr. Dodd, who, much to his honour, stuck close to him in all his disgrace and adversity, met Mr. Romaine, in his way from Newgate, at the bottom of the Old Bailey. Their conversation naturally turned upon the unhappy

person whom he had just left; and after usual inquiries, Mr. Romaine said, he was sorry to hear that Dr. Dodd in prison was visited by light and trifling company. The doctor's friend was equally surprised and hurt at the report of such an untruth; and particularly that it should have been carried to one, of whom Dr. Dodd had ever expressed a high opinion, and with whom in former years he had lived in a degree of intimacy. He told Mr. Romaine that indeed he was sadly misinformed; that by himself he might fairly estimate the society of Dr. Dodd's room; that none resorted thither but they whose minds were duly and deeply impressed like his own; and that, even as to others, he conceived that the surrounding circumstances of horror were sufficient to preclude all levity and impertinence. Mr. Romaine expressed himself as glad to hear this, gave up his authority upon which he made his former assertions, and promised to do all in his power to set right so injurious a business. He then left Dr. Dodd's friend at the door of St. Dunstan's, where he was going to preach his evening lecture.

Whether his prejudices were removed by this interview, or whether his pity was excited by the circumstances of the prisoner himself, Mr. Romaine afterwards visited him at his particular request. A gentleman, one day met him there, and, wishing to know his sentiments, took care to leave Newgate at the same time; when, walking out together, he asked him if he, who knew so much of the human heart, thought poor Dodd a real, sincere penitent. Mr. Romaine answered, I hope he may be a real penitent, but there is a great difference between saying and feeling, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This saying, as the lady who communicated it justly observed, deserves to be written in letters of gold. The same lady has favoured us with another anecdote of Mr. Romaine, which equally proves his abhorrence of sin, and his pity for the sinner. He was walking in the street with a gentleman, when he overheard a poor thoughtless man solemnly calling upon Jehovah to damn him for ever to the bottomless pit. Mr. Romaine stopped, took half-a-crown out of his pocket, and said, "My friend, I will give you this, if you will repeat that oath again." The man started, and said, "What, sir, do you think I will damn my soul for half-a-crown?" Mr. Romaine mildly replied, "As you did it just now for nothing, I could not suppose that you would refuse to do it for a reward." The poor creature, struck, as Mr. Romaine meant he should be, replied, "God bless and reward you, sir, whoever you are; I believe you have saved my soul. I hope I shall never swear again as long as I live."

It were to be wished, for the sake of posterity, that a man whose heart was so whole with God, and whose very soul was in the work of Christ, had kept a diary, or committed more of his thoughts and the occurrences of his life to writing. But among all his papers only one of this sort has been found, entitled, "An Old Man," and written on the day when he attained to the age of threescore years and ten. A happier day was never spent upon earth. Take the description of it in his own words.

"Through the gracious hand of my God I have this day arrived at the age of man; I have therefore set it apart for meditation, prayer, and praise. May the Holy Spirit help me to improve it, that I may spend the little of my remaining time with more faith and unceasing gratitude. When I look back, I would be all adoration. As a creature I worship the Creator. Once I was nothing, and He brought me into being. O, what distinguishing favour to make me a rational creature! And as I was a ruined man, a sinner guilty, helpless, miserable! O, what sovereign grace to make me a new man! Who can tell (I cannot) how great the love was which provided a Saviour for such a rebel! What patience, how infinite? To spare me through childhood, through youth, through manhood, when every day, and every thing in the day, were calling aloud for vengeance. I might have been many years ago in hell, and most justly; and now I adore the long-suffering of God, which kept me out of it. He had purposes of love toward me, which he made known in his own time and way. It was sovereign love which brought me to know myself, and to know Jesus. His own holy Spirit begun and carried on the work. He opened mine eyes to understand the scriptures. He gave me to believe their truth, and to feel their

power; and now I set my seal to every word in them; finding God to be true and faithful, true in the promise, faithful in the fulfilment. Rec. Christ—one with him—live by him—live on him—worship him—do all on earth as well as I can, till he enable me to do it better in heaven.

"In this believing view of things, I acknowledge that I have lived to a blessed time. All that is worth enjoying has been freely given to me. By the quickening grace of the Spirit, brought into oneness with Jesus, and to partake of the Father's love in Him, all is mine. Glory be to Father, Son, and Spirit in the highest, the covenanting 3ty.* is mine. These are the prospects which faith, looking back, opens to the Christian with delight; and thereby renders my present condition a subject of praise and thankfulness. My time is almost run out, and what is short is now also but labour and sorrow. So says the Oracle. And I feel it. The infirmities of age, the decay of the faculties of mind as well as body, consequently usefulness in one's place and station dying daily, these are always giving warning that the house made with hands must soon be taken down. It begins to be very troublesome to keep it up. One prop falls after another, and repeats the lesson—You must soon be turned out. Look after the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Blessed be God for giving us the earnest of his Spirit, to enable us to look forward with a pleasing hope, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

"It is by this same faith that God has reconciled my heart to his providence. He is my Father, Jesus my portion, and my exceeding great reward; my God, and my Keeper. It is my privilege that he is to manage for me. He knows what is best for me, and to him I leave it. To be richer or greater, in more health, or in more honour, would be no addition to my happiness. I have enough of this world's goods. I am content with my place and station, and ask for nothing but more thankfulness for what I have. O what a calm does this bring upon my mind! Looking back I can see his gracious dealings with me in all the events of my life. And he has brought me and settled me in the very condition in which I ought to be. What has God done? What has he not done to make me satisfied? Indeed I have all the reason that ever man had to adore him for his providence, and to bless him for his dealings with the children of men.

"This day such are my views of his goodness to me in the time past, both in temporal, and also in spiritual mercies. All is well; and blessings on his name, the prospect before me, notwithstanding the infirmities of age, is comfortable. The promises in the word afford exercise for faith, and never-ceasing dependence; not only general promises, but also particular, suited exactly to my present circumstances. Our God has made gracious provision for old age, and has enabled me to make use of it, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures, I might now have hope. He has given me a general warrant for my security. I have committed myself into his care and keeping; and he has declared, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." This is a continual cordial, and extends its heart-felt influence to the special promises, such as Isaiah xlvi. 3, 4. This is spoken to the whole Israel of God, who have not only the life of the body from him, but chiefly the life of the soul. He creates them anew by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He is the Author—He is the carrier on—He brings that life to its full perfection. It is every moment supported by his power, and blessed with his paternal affection. Age may come, hoary hairs may appear, the vigour of the faculties may decay, but his love is the same. He reveals it. He applies it. The old man feels it, and he turns it into the prayer of faith. O my Father, I do hearken unto thee; Thou hast supported, Thou hast carried me from my birth to this moment; and I doubt not but now in mine old age, and in my hoary hairs, Thou wilt still carry me and bear me, until Thou hast finally delivered me. *Amen*—I believe, Lord, it shall be done unto me according to thy word."

The last years of his life seem to have taken their turn from this day. His

* The *Trinity*. In this instance, as well as in another, a few lines above, *viz.* the abbreviation *Rec.* for *receive*, I thought it best to leave the expressions as I found them in the original manuscript.

"hoary head was found in the way of righteousness, and it was indeed a crown of glory." There appeared to be little but heaven in his sermons, and in his life. He was "an example to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith and purity." It has been observed to me of him, that he was a diamond, rough often, but very pointed, and the more he was broken by years, the more he appeared to shine. There was indeed a light upon his countenance, and particularly when he preached, which appeared like the dawn, or the faint resemblance of glory. If one met him by the way, and asked him how he did, his general answer was, "As well as I can be out of heaven." He made this reply a little before his death, to a friend and acquaintance older than himself, and of a different communion; and then added, "there is but one central point, in which we must all meet, Jesus Christ and him crucified." This was the object which he kept always in sight—this the subject which dwelt upon his heart and tongue—the wonderful God-man, whom, according to his own expressions, he had taken for body and for soul, for time and for eternity, his present and his everlasting all.

He has drawn his own character when describing the "Triumph of Faith" over the infirmities of age. He was a cheerful pleasant old man. He walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham, and "brought forth more fruit in his age till he died an old man and full of days," satisfied with all that was past, all that was present, and all that was before him. He pursued his ministerial labours, and his summer excursions (which he frequently denominated his summer and winter campaigns) to the last, keeping the field as a good soldier and servant of Jesus Christ, till it pleased his Master to call him to an honourable retreat, and soon to give him his final discharge. The decline of his mortal life was gentle in itself, and rapid in its progress; but so protracted as to enable him to show, that the "Lord his strength was true, and that there was no unrighteousness in him." The same faith, which employed him so well and so happily in his health and life, was his support in sickness, and his joy in dissolution.

His fatal illness attacked him on the sixth day of June, and put a period to his mortal life on the twenty-sixth day of July—a season of seven weeks, in which he was exercised as a patient instead of a preacher. As the presence of God had been with him in one state, so it did not leave him in the other. The last sermon which he preached, was on the preceding Thursday evening at St. Dunstan's; it was an exposition of the eighteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel; he remarked to his curate, that he must get on as fast as he could, lest he should not get through the Gospel, as it was his intention to do, before the lectures were over. He complained of languor after preaching, and returned to Mr. Whitridge's house at Balaam-hill, beyond Clapham, where he was then upon a visit. His concluding sermon at Blackfriars was on the preceding Tuesday morning from the thirteenth verse of the hundred and third Psalm, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." He was going through the Psalm, and though he did not preach upon the following verses, he practised them in a very remarkable manner, and left his dying testimony to the truth of them. "For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, to them that fear him: and his righteousness unto children's children. To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." The mortality of man and the mercy of Jehovah, here so pathetically described, met together in the person of Mr. Romaine, and formed a most delightful union. The one released him from all misery, the other introduced him to all happiness. But how sad is the case when these things are separated? What a wretch is one, subject to mortality, and not at the same time an object of the mercy of the Lord?

Mr. Romaine, from the moment that he was seized with his illness, considered it as his last; and though at intervals he had faint symptoms of a probable recovery, yet he never attempted to resume his ministerial functions. He spoke of himself as a dying man, but always in the language of one who was living

and believing in Jesus. On the morning of his seizure he came down to breakfast at six o'clock as usual, presided in family devotion, and prayed most earnestly to God, that "He would fit them for, and support them in, their trials that day, which might be many." Such they were to his friends, if not to himself; for he received his summons "to depart, and to be with Christ." He returned the same day to London, and conversed most profitably and comfortably in the way, on the approach of death, and near prospect of eternity. "O! how animating is the view which I now have of death, and the hope laid up for me in heaven full of glory and immortality!"

The next day was the sabbath, and he was expected to preach as usual. The feelings of his congregation, when he did not appear among them, and the painful office to which his fellow-servant in the ministry was called, when he stood up in his place and assigned the cause of his absence, are more easily conceived than described. Lamentations more sincere never were excited, and prayers more fervent never ascended from earth to heaven.

He continued three weeks in London under medical advice, and made use of the means which his physician thought fit to prescribe to him. "You are taking," said he, "much pains to prop up this feeble body: I thank you for it; it will not do now." His Hebrew psalter lay close by him, and out of it he frequently read a verse or two, not being able to attend to more. The nature of his disorder was such, that he could speak but little; and being once asked if he would see some of his friends, he replied, "he needed no better company than he enjoyed." The Lord his God was with him, and so blessed him with faith and patience that no one fretful or murmuring word ever escaped his lips.

Soon after he was seized, a friend called upon business, and took the opportunity of saying, he hoped he was better, and happy in his views. "Yes," replied he, "upon that point I have no doubt, for I have much of the presence of Jesus with me." He sent a message by this person to his curate, being unable to converse with him, to desire his prayers; and that his friends, and all the congregation, would remember him at the throne of grace. This he frequently afterwards repeated to his curate. At other times he said, "he had been in the deep waters, but had enjoyed much support; that he waited to enter into the courts of the Lord; that his soul was athirst for God, yea, even the living God."

On the twenty-sixth of June he left town, and went to a friend's house at Tottenham, for a fortnight, where he was so much better, as to be able to walk about the garden. Upon his return to town, he was again visited by his curate, and thought to be a little revived. He said, that he had long laid at first in the arms of death, and, if recovering, it was very slowly. "But this," says he, "is but a poor dying life at best; however, I am in his hands who will do the best for me," and added with a peculiar energy, "I am sure of that. I have lived to experience all I have spoken, and all I have written, and I bless God for it." After much the same expressions he added to another friend, "I have the peace of God in my conscience, and the love of God in my heart; and that, you know, is sound experience"—and again—"I knew before the doctrines I preached to be truths, but now I experience them to be blessings." Thanking another friend for a visit, he said, "that he had come to see a saved sinner" This, he had often affirmed, should be his dying boast, and that he desired to die with the language of the publican in his mouth, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

In this frame of mind he continued a few days in London, and returned on the thirteenth day of July to his friends at Balaam-hill, where he had been originally seized. His strength from that time rapidly decayed. He had frequent spasms at his heart, and shortness of breath, attended with degrees of pain and convulsion; but his faith and patience never failed him. He was frequently saying, "O how good is God! What entertainments and comforts does he give me: What a prospect do I see before me of glory and immortality! He is my God in life, in death, and throughout eternity." On the twenty-third day of July, as he sat at breakfast, he said, "It is now near sixty years since God opened my mouth to publish the everlasting sufficiency and eternal glory

of the salvation of Christ Jesus; and it has now pleased him to shut my mouth, that my heart might feel and experience what my mouth hath so often spoken." On the twenty-fourth day of July, after he had been helped down stairs, he said, "O! how good is God! with what a night has he favoured me!" requesting, as he had often done, that prayers without ceasing might be made for him, that his faith and patience might not fail. He expressed exceeding great kindness and affection for his partner Mrs. Romaine, and thanking her for all her care of him, he said, "Come, my love, that I may bless you; the Lord be with you a covenant God for ever to save and bless you." He addressed himself with the same tenderness and affection to his son; of whom also he spoke much and oft during his illness, expressing his hope of him as a son in the faith as well as the flesh. The lady who was cherishing in her house such a dying guest, upon seeing and hearing him bless his wife, said, "Have you not a blessing for me, sir?" "Yes," he said, "I have; I pray God to bless you," and so he said to every one that came to him. On Saturday the twenty-fifth day of July, he was not down stairs at all, but lay upon the couch all day, in great weakness of body, but strong in faith, giving glory to God.—The power of Christ was resting upon him, and keeping him in the continual exercise of prayer and praise. This was the last day spent upon earth, and in the close of it he was thought to have said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." About an hour before he died, his friend and host went up to him, and said, "I hope, my dear sir, you now find the salvation of Jesus Christ precious, dear, and valuable to you." His answer was, "He is a precious Saviour to me now." These were the last words which he uttered to man. To the Lord he said, "Holy, Holy, Holy! Holy blessed Jesus, to thee be endless praise!" And in the first hour of the next day, which was the sabbath-day, he resigned his spirit to God who gave it.

So lived and so died the Rev. William Romaine.

It was the design of his surviving relations to restore his dust to the earth with a plain and private burial; but every intention of this sort was prevented by the affection of his numerous friends, who were all importunate to show the last respect to his person, by attending his remains to the grave. On Monday, the third day of August, 1795, the corpse was removed from Mr. Whitridge's house, at Balaam-hill, in order to be interred in the rectory-vault of Blackfriars church. The funeral proceeded about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and was joined on Clapham-common, by nearly fifty coaches, filled with the lamenting followers of their revered and beloved pastor. It was attended by many more on foot, who surrounded the hearse, or followed it weeping. By the time that the procession reached the Obelisk in St. George's Fields, the multitude collected was very great indeed; but silence, solemnity, and decorum, universally prevailed. At the foot of Blackfriars bridge, the children of the charity-school, together with the parish beadles, were waiting to attend. The city marshals on horseback with their men, and with black silk scarfs, and hatbands, rode before the hearse to the entrance of the church. These had been ordered out by the lord mayor, as his token of respect to the memory of a man who had sustained so great and so useful a character in the city of London. The constables of the ward also attended to preserve order, lest any evil-minded people should take advantage of such an opportunity to raise a disturbance; but nothing of the kind appeared: there seemed to be but one mind in the vast multitude, and but one impression made by the loss of an able minister of the New Testament, and a faithful steward of the mysteries of God.

Excepting the space left for the entrance of the corpse and its attendants, the church was previously filled with people, who were clothed in black, and were inwardly mourning over their departed minister. The funeral service was performed by the Rev. Mr. Goode to a very numerous and affected audience, weeping not for him who was at rest from his labours, but for themselves and for their children, who had lost the benefit of them.

The church was hung in black, as was also the church at St. Dunstan's, and three funeral sermons preached on the Lord's day following. The same tokens of love and esteem were shown in different places of worship, and the same

testimonies borne by different ministers to the excellencies of a man who deserved so well of them all. He lived and died in the communion of the English church, and in most cordial fellowship with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

There remained to be paid but one tribute more, and that was a monument, which is now erected in the church where his body is laid. A monument inscribed, not with the virtues of a statesman or a hero, but with the heavenly virtues of a man whom God "called out of darkness into his marvellous light," whom he permitted to shine for a season in his church upon earth, and has now gathered to his people in heaven; where "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

A Catalogue of the Writings of the Rev. William Romaine, A. M. published by him in his Life-time.

1739. The Divine Legation of Moses, demonstrated from his having made express mention of, and insisted so much on the doctrine of a Future State: whereby Mr. Warburton's attempt to prove the Divine Legation of Moses from the Omission of a Future State is proved to be absurd, and destructive of all Revelation; a Sermon preached before the University at St. Mary's, in Oxford, March 4, 1739, from Mark xii. 24, 25, 26, 27.

1741. No Justification by the Law of Nature: a Sermon preached before the Lord Mayor at the cathedral church of St. Paul, September 2, from Rom. ii. 14, 15.

1742. Future Rewards and Punishments, proved to be the sanctions of the Mosaic dispensation: a second Sermon, from Mark xii. 26, 27, preached before the University at St. Mary's in Oxford, December 6, 1741.

1742. Jephthah's Vow fulfilled, and his Daughter not sacrificed: a Sermon preached before the University at St. Mary's, in Oxford, from Judges xi. 30, 31.

1747. Concordance and Lexicon of Marius de Calasio, 4 vols. folio, printed at London.

1753. An answer to a Pamphlet entitled, Considerations on the Bill to permit Persons professing the Jewish Religion to be Naturalized. Motto, Acts xiv. 4. Reprinted by the Citizens of London, 1753.

1755. Nine Sermons on the 107th Psalm.

1755. A Discourse on the Benefit which the Holy Spirit of God is to a Man in his Journey through Life; preached at Christ Church in Newgate-Street, on Whitsun-Monday, May 19, from Ezek xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.

1755. A Discourse upon the Self-existence of Jesus Christ, preached at St. George's, Hanover-square, and at St. Dunstan's in the West, from John viii. 24.

1755. A Method for preventing the Frequency of Robberies and Murders: proposed in a Discourse delivered at St. George's, Hanover-square, St. Dunstan's in the West, and at several other places in London, from Matt. xv. 19, 20.

1755. An Alarm to a Careless World: a Discourse preached November 30, at St. Dunstan's in the West, from Amos iv. 12.

1756. The Duty of Watchfulness enforced, in a Discourse preached December 14, 1755, from Matt. xxv. 13.

1756. The Sure Foundation: two Discourses preached before the University of Oxford, April 11, in the morning at St. Mary's, and in the afternoon at St. Peter's, from 1 Cor. iii. 11.

1756. The Parable of the Dry Bones: interpreted in a Sermon preached at St. Olave's, Southwark, October 24, from Ezek. xxxvii. 4.

1757. The Lord our Righteousness: considered in two Discourses preached before the University of Oxford, March 20, in the morning at St. Mary's, and in the afternoon at St Peter's, from Isaiah xlv. 8.

1757. An Earnest Invitation to the Friends of the Established Church to join with several of their Brethren, Clergy and Laity, in London, in setting apart one Hour of every Week for Prayer and Supplication, during the present troublesome times. Motto, Psalm l. 15.
1757. The Duty of Praying for Others: a Sermon on Acts xii. 5.
1757. A Seasonable Antidote against Popery, in a Dialogue upon Justification.
1759. Twelve Sermons upon Solomon's Song.
1759. The Knowledge of Salvation precious in the Hour of Death: a Sermon preached January 4, upon the death of the Rev. Mr. James Hervey, from Luke ii. 29, 30.
1760. Twelve Discourses upon the Law and the Gospel.
1762. The Blessedness of Living and Dying in the Lord: a Sermon upon the death of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Jones, chaplain of St. Saviour's, Southwark, from Psalm cxvi. 15.
1763. The Life of Faith.
1764. A Sermon, preached at St. Ann's, Blackfriars, on Sunday, September 30th, upon his Nomination as a Candidate for the Rectory, from 2 Cor. iv. 5.
1765. The Scriptural Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper briefly stated.
1771. The Walk of Faith, 2 Vols. since in 1 Vol.
1775. An Essay on Psalmody, with a collection out of the Book of Psalms, suited to every Sunday in the Year.
1795. The Triumph of Faith.
1795. A short Hebrew Grammar, 12mo.

This Catalogue is as exact as we can make it; but we are not certain as to the dates of some of the Publications, not being able to get at the first Editions of them.

TWELVE DISCOURSES

ON

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

Preached at St. Dunstan's in the West, London.

PREFACE.

MANY are the mistakes at present about religious matters; but none are more destructive than those which concern the law and the gospel. The generality of our people confound them, and put one in the place of the other. Some suppose they are to be accepted of God for their works, and that they can be justified by the law in the sight of God. Others make their keeping of the law the condition of their receiving the blessings of the gospel, as if these were to be the purchase and reward of their partial obedience. Some are persuaded they must do all they can, and keep the law with all their might, and wherein they come short of the perfect demands of the law, Christ will, out of his merits, atone for their failings. And others again think that Christ has abated the rigour of the law, and that the gospel is nothing more than a new law dispensation, in which the Lord has been pleased to declare that he will accept of sincere obedience instead of perfect. These and many more such like mistakes prevail in our times, and they are exceedingly dangerous, tending to the utter ruin both of body and soul. In the following discourses I have endeavoured to distinguish, and precisely to settle the difference between the law and the gospel. Some of the principles upon which I have proceeded are these:

1. The Lord God, the Almighty Creator of all things visible and invisible, has an unalienable right to make laws for the government of his creatures. This right is founded in his absolute dominion on and sovereignty over them. They are his property, the work of his hands. He hath created and made them, and not they themselves. Their life, and all things belonging to it are his, coming from his gift, and continued by his bounty: and therefore he has a most indisputable claim to their obedience. What he requires, they must perform; because they are his creatures. The relation between the Creator and his creatures puts them under a necessity of obeying his law and will, or else of suffering whatever he shall threaten to inflict upon their disobedience.

2. The law of the Lord God, the almighty Creator, is unalterable. It changeth not; for it is the copy of God's most holy mind and will, in which there can be no variableness, neither shadow of turning. If the mind and will of God were to change, then God would be a changeable being, and whatever is changeable is imperfect, but God is perfect, therefore his mind and will change not. His word will he not break, nor alter the law that is gone out of his mouth. His infinite wisdom, and his almighty power, stand engaged to maintain its dignity, that it may be always an holy, just, and good law, which he will not break or alter.

3. The moral law, which the Lord God revealed to Adam in Paradise, required of him perfect uninterrupted obedience. The whole moral law is summed up in one word, namely, love; love to God for the blessings of creation and providence, and love to man for God's sake. This love was the indispensable

homage due to the Creator. It could not be alienated from him, and given to any other object without idolatry: for which reason the moral law is unalterable. If a man withdraw his love in the least from God, he breaks that law which positively enjoins him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength.

4. The law given to Adam being unalterable, all his descendants are bound to keep it; for they are all under the law, as God's creatures. His will is the indispensable rule of their obedience. He requires their love, and if they refuse to give it him, then their will is opposite to his, which is rebellion against their sovereign Lord, and which must bring upon them swift destruction.

5. All mankind have sinned and broken the moral law. The authority of God's word is positive and express. "We have before proved," says the apostle, "both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin, as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one." Rom. iii. 9, 10, &c. And after the apostle has proved these truths from various arguments, he sums up the evidence thus: "Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and that all the world may become guilty before God; therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Rom. iii. 19, 20. It is evident from these authorities, that all have sinned, and are transgressors of the law.

6. The law has made no provision for the pardon of the least transgression. It requires perfect unsinning obedience in thought, word, and deed. This is its just demand. And in case of the least failing, it immediately passes sentence and condemns. It will not accept of sorrow or tears, of repentance or amendment, as any satisfaction; but its language is, "Do this, or thou shalt die." There is not a word said about sorrowing for what was past, and reforming for the future, as if the style of the law was, "Be sorry for thy sin, and reform, and then thou shalt not die:" but it is positive and express, "Keep the law, and thou shalt live; transgress it, and thou shalt die: for cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law to do them."

7. From these premises it follows, that the law being unalterable, and all men having broken it, and there being no provision made in the law for the pardon of the least transgression, but a punishment threatened to the least, they are therefore guilty before God. The law brings them in guilty, and condemns them, and divine justice is bound to inflict the deserved pains and penalties; so that there can be no possibility of justifying them by the law. By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified: for the law is expressly called by the apostle, the ministration of condemnation, and the ministration of death.

8. Since the law is thus unalterable, and punishment is threatened to the least breach of it, and since all men have broken it, and all the world is guilty before God, and condemned by the law to death and hell, and without strength to do any thing for their deliverance, it follows that there can be no salvation by the law.

From these particulars we may be able to state the true nature of the moral law. It is the revealed will of God discovering to his creatures what obedience he requires of them, namely, perfect unsinning obedience, an absolute conformity to the law in thought, word, and deed. It is an unalterable law, founded on God's unalterable will, and therefore it requires this perfect obedience of all men, and at all times. It has made no provision for partial obedience, or for sincere obedience, but insists upon man's continuing to do all things that are written in the book of the law, if he hope by the deeds of the law to be justified and saved.

If this be the true state of the case, how widely do these men mistake the nature and demands of the moral law, who expect to be made righteous before God, by their partial obedience. The law knows nothing of any righteousness, but what is perfect. If you put your trial at God's bar upon this issue, that you have kept the law in most instances, having failed only in some few, this is pleading guilty. It is owning your transgression, and confessing that you have not such a righteousness as the law demands: for a part is not the whole. And the law insists

upon the whole, and, in case of failure, passes sentence, and condemns you; for it is written, "Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things," &c.

But some may ask, Will not the law accept of sincere obedience? Nay. It will abate nothing of its demands. It will have absolutely perfect obedience, if by the works of it a man be justified before God. There is not one word in the law about sincerity; no, not a single hint, as if a man might be pardoned, who kept the law sincerely, although imperfectly. The law says—Do all things which God has commanded, and continue to do them with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength, and then thou shalt be justified by thy works; but if thou offend in one instance, thou comest under the curse; for he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all, and consequently sincere obedience failing in one point, leaves a man guilty, and under the curses of the broken law.

It highly concerns those persons to consider this matter well, who fancy that Christ came as a great lawgiver, to publish milder terms of acceptance than the moral law had required. They have a notion of Christ, as if he were only the publisher of some new remedial law, which abated something of the demands, and mitigated some of the rigour of the moral law: whereas he came not to publish any new law, but to save his people from their sins committed against the old law. He came to be a Saviour, and not a lawgiver. Indeed, he preached the law, but it was to bring men to the knowledge of sin, and to see and to feel their want of his salvation. But he preached nothing new. He only enforced the law in its spiritual nature, and in its full extent, showing the length and breadth, the depth and height of the commandment. He would not have his people so much as entertain a thought of his coming to make a change in the moral law. "Think not," says he, "that I am come to destroy the law; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil it:" and he did fulfil it; for he was born under the law, and was obedient to it even unto death. The law was unalterable. It could not change, unless God's most holy mind and will could change, which is impossible, and therefore the law being broken, could not remit the deserved punishment, unless some infinitely perfect obedience should be paid, and some infinitely meritorious sufferings should be undergone in the sinner's stead, by which the law might be magnified and made honourable. And the Lord Christ undertook to do this. He vouchsafed to obey and to suffer for his people; to obey the precepts, and to suffer the pains and penalties of the law. The law had indicted them, and found them guilty of disobedience. Christ came to obey for them, as it is written, "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The law had put them under the curse, and he came to redeem them from the curse of the law. The law threatened to punish them, and he came to bear their sins, and the punishment due to them in his own body upon the tree. So that Christ came not to publish a new remedial law, but to glorify the moral law, and to demonstrate the unchangeable nature of it, since no obedience, and no sufferings, but his, which were absolutely perfect, divine and infinite, could work out such a righteousness for any one sinner, as the law required, in order to his being justified in the sight of God.

As these arguments show that the sinner cannot of himself attain the perfect rightcousness which the law demands, so do they prove that he cannot by any means in his own power escape the punishment which the law threatens. The law requires unsinning obedience, and enforces it upon those sanctions,—"Do this and thou shalt live." "In the day that thou transgressest, dying thou shalt surely die." These sanctions of the law are as much the mind and will of God, as the rule of the law itself: and his will is unalterable; consequently upon transgression the sanction took place, and the transgressor became subject to the first, and to the second death, which justice was bound to see inflicted upon him. What could he do in this case to deliver himself? Could he offer any thing to divine justice, to save himself from receiving the wages of sin? No. They are his due, and he must receive them. Say, he is sorry for his sin, and weeps and mourns bitterly. What does this avail? This is only an open confession of his guilt, and an acknowledgment that he deserves punishment. Suppose he amends and reforms his life. What atonement is this for his former bad life? The law will not be satisfied with such partial obedience. But he promises never

to sin for the future. If he could keep his promise, it would not satisfy the law; for what becomes of his past disobedience? One single sin cuts him off for ever from being saved by the law; and since all have sinned, consequently by the works of the broken law can no man living be justified.

This is the true state of all men by nature. They are all sinners, and they cannot be saved by the moral law. It can neither altogether nor in part justify them, and therefore it shuts them up under guilt, and leaves them without remedy and without hope. As soon as man was fallen into this state, it pleased God to reveal that rich plan of grace and mercy, which is contained in the gospel, of which this is a short sketch.

1. The gospel is salvation from the law. It brings glad tidings for poor convinced sinners, discovering to them how their sins may be pardoned, and they may be redeemed from the curses of the broken law. It reveals to them what Christ has done and suffered to satisfy the law, and how he endured the pains and penalties of it, dying the death, to which the law had sentenced them. And the gospel calls upon them to receive the benefit of what he did and suffered as his free gift, proposing to them, without money and without price, all the graces and blessings which the Saviour purchased with his life and death.

2. The gospel sets forth to the convinced sinner salvation from guilt and punishment, by giving him freely as perfect a righteousness as the law demands. It invites him to receive the righteousness of Christ, against which the utmost rigour of the law can make no objection. Because it is the righteousness of God, a divine, infinite, and absolutely perfect righteousness. When this righteousness is imputed to the sinner, he is pardoned; the law ceases to accuse; conscience no longer condemns: he has peace with God, and the love of God reigns in his heart.

3. In order to receive this righteousness the gospel requires no previous qualification. The sinner is not regarded, as fit and meet to receive Christ's righteousness by any thing he himself can do. Christ freely wrought it out, and he freely gives it. The works of the law have no merit to purchase it: for it is written, "We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." And if it be by grace, then it cannot be by any works or qualifications.

4. But how is Christ's righteousness received, and the sinner made righteous by it at God's bar? By faith and not by works. "For to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

5. With respect then to the sinner's acceptance and justification before God, the law and the gospel ought to be distinguished in these as well as in other respects.

According to the law, salvation is by works, according to the gospel, it is by grace.

The law says, Do this; but the gospel says, Believe this, and thou shalt be saved.

The law threatens to punish the sinner for the first offence, but the gospel offers him pardon for many offences.

The law leaves him under guilt and condemnation, the gospel invites him to receive pardon and salvation.

The law sentences him to death, the gospel offers him justification to life.

By the law he is a guilty sinner, by the gospel he may be made a glorious saint.

If he die under the guilt of the broken law, hell will be his everlasting portion; if he die a partaker of the grace of the gospel, heaven will be his eternal inheritance.

6. But if the law and the gospel are distinct in these and several other respects, some persons may think the law is totally repealed by the gospel: for they cannot see wherefore serveth the law, unless it be to justify a sinner. The law is unalterable. It cannot change any more than God can change. To this day it stands in full force, and not one tittle of it is repealed. It is still the re-

velation of God's most holy mind and will, concerning the obedience which he requires of his creatures. And if they disobey, the law immediately passes sentence and condemns them to death. While they continue careless and secure in sin, they consider not the law as the ministration of death and condemnation; and none of them see it in this light, until the Holy Spirit awaken them. It is by his preaching of the law to their consciences, that they are alarmed with fearful apprehensions of their guilt, and of their danger. He brings them to see the exceeding sinfulness of sinning against the holy, just, and good law of God, and convinces them that the broken law can never make them legally righteous. This puts them upon seeking such a righteousness as the law requires, and disposes them to receive gladly the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ: for he is now the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

7. Thus the Holy Spirit convinces sinners that the law is not repealed by the gospel, and when he gives them the righteousness which is of God by faith, and they have justification to life freely by grace, does he teach them to make void the law by faith? God forbid. Yea, they establish the law: for they consent unto it that it is good. They delight in the law of God after the inward man, and they keep it in their outward life and conversation. It is the rule of their holy walking. They are free from the law as to its condemning, killing power, but they are under the law to Christ. They know, that if the law had not been unalterable, and of indispensable obligation, Christ had lived and died in vain. And he did not come to give his people liberty to break the unalterable law; that would be a contradiction in terms. But he came to establish the law, by restoring it to its honour and dignity, by his obedience to its precepts, and by his suffering its pains and penalties, and then by making it honourable in the confession of convinced sinners, and in the lives of his redeemed people.

These are some of the principal points treated of in the following discourses; in which I have endeavoured to follow scripture closely. This has been my guide; and I have constantly desired his teaching who inspired it. And I now pray him to shine into the heart of every one who reads these discourses. May he always accompany the perusal of them with his divine grace and blessing; and if they be made useful to the church of Christ, may his be all the glory. Give it him, reader; for it is his due; and pray for thy hearty well-wisher,

W. R.

DISCOURSE I.

THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE TEACHING.

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.—John vi. 45.

This is a sweet promise, full of comfort to the children of God. So soon as he has given them a desire to be taught, the Lord has spoken it by the mouth of his holy prophets, that they may come to him to receive instruction. He, the all-wise God, will be their teacher.

He will open the eyes of their understanding clearly to discern spiritual things, and will make them wise unto salvation. In the book of Psalms we find frequent prayers for this divine teaching; and among the high and honourable titles of God, this is used to describe his goodness to the children of men—"He that teacheth man knowledge;" and not man considered merely as ignorant, but also as guilty. "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way," Psal. xxv. 8; which shows the wonderful condescension of our divine teacher. He vouchsafes to be the instructor of sinners, in order to bring them out of darkness into light, and out of misery into happiness: "for blessed is the man," says the Psalmist (xciv. 12.), whom thou teachest out of thy law." He is blessed because he is taught of God, and taught by him out of the law, to know his guilt and misery; and taught also to know the remedy provided for both. Blessed surely is he whom God thus teaches; and yet how few among us seek this blessedness! Even among those

who profess their belief of it, its importance is not sufficiently valued. The privilege is great, inestimably great; but they are too apt to neglect it; while others proudly fancy they can teach themselves, or they think it no honour to be taught of God; they disbelieve the reality, or they neglect the importance of divine teaching. Some of these reasons prevail with the generality of nominal Christians, and hinder them from being convinced of the truth of what is written in the prophets: "And they shall be all taught of God." But he that teacheth man knowledge can, and, glory be to his rich grace! he does, convince him of the necessity of being taught of God. He does enlighten the darkest; he does humble the proudest mind, and bring it earnestly to pray for instruction—"Lord, what I know not, that teach thou me." May this be the prayer of all your hearts, while I am explaining the nature of the promise in the text, and may God fulfil it to you at this time, that you may be convinced,

First, Of the necessity of being taught of God!

Secondly, Of the manner in which God teaches his people;

Thirdly, Of the proper disposition of mind which he gives them, in order to their receiving and profiting from his divine teaching.

First. Divine teaching consists in opening the eyes of the understanding to perceive spiritual and divine objects, and to see their value and importance in disposing the will to choose them, and the heart to love them. The divine teacher is the Holy Spirit. He prepares the mind to receive his instruction, and then fills it with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The necessity of his doing this is founded in the present state and circumstances of fallen men: for through sin all the faculties of the soul were lost, and the understanding, which is the eye of the soul, was left in the same condition as the bodily eyes would be if they had no light. Hence the Psalmist declares, that there is none who understandeth the things of God; and he represents God as looking down from heaven to see if there were any who did understand and seek after God; but he found none, no not one. They all had their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. The prophets give us the same character, and speak of men as if they were all blind, and describe the Messiah to be the sun of righteousness; the light who was to arise to lighten the Gentiles, and was to be the glory of his people Israel. Thus Jehovah says of his beloved son, "I the Lord will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes," Isa. xlii. 6, 7. And again—"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth," Isa. xlix. 6. How did our Lord fulfil these prophecies? He did not, while he was upon earth, open the bodily eye of any blind person among the Gentiles, but he has fulfilled them, and, glory be to his great name! he is daily fulfilling them in the Gentile world, by opening the blind eyes of our understandings to see and to discern the things of God. In this sense the Psalmist, speaking both of Jews and Gentiles, says, Psalm cxlvi. 8. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind," that is, the Lord Christ: for we read, Isaiah xxxv. 4, 5. "Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; your God will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened: for in that day (Isa. xxix. 18,) shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." All these scriptures had their happy accomplishment, when God, who was to come and save us, spake with his own mouth, and said, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness," John xii. 46.

From these authorities it is certain that fallen man is in darkness, and cannot see the things of God. The eyes of his understanding are in the same condition as his bodily eyes would be without light. He cannot see any spiritual objects; and how, then, can he come to the knowledge of them, unless he be taught them of God? By what other way or means can he discern them? Has he any powers or faculties of his own, which can help to enlighten him? No, he has none: for since the eyes of his understanding are in darkness, all his endeavours to enlighten them, without divine teaching, will be like those of a

blind man, who only makes his blindness more manifest the more he labours and strives to give an account of those objects which he never saw nor felt.

But cannot the arts and sciences enlighten his blind eyes? No. They cannot help him to discover one single spiritual idea. The arts and sciences treat of the objects of sense; to these they are confined, and cannot get beyond the bounds of nature; for it is a certain truth, and indeed it is at present a received opinion, that all our ideas come from sense. We are not able to form an idea of any thing, unless it fall under the observation of some of our senses. If any one of the senses be destroyed, the man is not able to form an idea of any object peculiar to that sense. A man born deaf has no idea of sounds, nor a blind man of colours. Since, then, the arts and sciences treat entirely of the objects of sense, how can they give us any ideas of those things which are not objects of sense? for was it ever known that the stream rose higher than the fountain head?

From hence it appears, that if the understanding be ever so greatly refined and enlarged with the knowledge of arts and sciences, yet it stands in as much need of divine teaching as the most ignorant peasant does; because the things of God are not discoverable by the arts and sciences. Let matter of fact speak to this point. Has there not been a total ignorance of divine things, whenever the light of revelation has been extinguished? Look into the learned ages of Greece, and you find the several sects of philosophers inquiring, What is the chief good of men? and none of them could discover what it was, and disputing about the origin of evil, and never coming near the truth. Look into the times when Rome was raised to its highest glory, and was as famous for its learning as for its conquests, and you will not find one learned Roman who can tell you what God is. Tully has written a book upon the nature of the gods, and it is one of the most valuable of his writings; for therein he gives us the opinions of the philosophers upon this subject, and shows his own and their exceeding great ignorance of it. From these instances, not to mention others, it is evident that a man may have all the knowledge which arts and sciences can give him, and yet be totally ignorant of God, and of the things of God.

This has appeared from undoubted matter of fact. We know from the experience of the Greeks and Romans, that arts and sciences never did lead them to the knowledge of any spiritual and divine objects; and we are assured, from the testimony of God's word, that they never can. Man, in his natural state, blinded by sin, and under the power of it, cannot attain to any such knowledge. The apostle has decided this point for us. Speaking of the politest classical age of Rome, he says of her great philosophers and celebrated authors, that they were without understanding; that they became vain in their imaginations; and their foolish hearts were darkened. What! was Tully without understanding? Was the imagination of Virgil vain, and the heart of Seneca foolish? Yes, in the things of God; "for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. While he remains a natural man, it is absolutely impossible that he should know them; "neither *can* he know them," because he has no spiritual discernment, by which alone spiritual objects can be discovered; and therefore he must remain for ever ignorant of them, unless God should open the eyes of his understanding, and bring him out of darkness into his marvellous light.

This is a very humbling, but it is a real view of human nature, and I need not to have gone to distant ages and countries for proof. We have it near enough at home, if men's pride would but let them see it; but their pride arises chiefly from their ignorance of it, and helps to keep them ignorant. If they had but a little humility, they would discover how imperfect their knowledge is, even of the things about them, and they would therefore see the necessity of being taught of God in these things, which were out of the reach of their senses: such are all spiritual and divine things; and in these they want divine teaching, and the promise is, concerning these, "All thy children shall be taught of God." Now, God never acts in vain. Unless his children wanted teaching, he need not be their teacher: but in what belongs to the spiritual world they are entirely ignorant,

and they have no means of discovering, unless they be taught of God, what state they are in by nature, and if it be a state of guilt and misery, how are they to be delivered from it. God has revealed in his holy word the knowledge of what belongs to these two states; but sin has so blinded men's understandings, and depraved their judgments, that they will not assent to what is revealed, nor be determined by it, until the Holy Spirit convince them what they are by nature, and what they may be by grace. Accordingly, the scripture declares, that the Holy Spirit is the inspirer of every good thought, and word, and work. He enlightens the children of God with saving truth, and subdues the opposition which was in their wills to it, and that enmity which was in their hearts. From the first moment he awakens them, and opens the eyes of their understanding; until he bring them safe to glory; he is their teacher. He teaches them to look upon sin, as it is in itself, exceeding sinful; he alarms the conscience, and makes it feel the guilt and danger of sin; he leads the humbled and convinced sinner to Christ for pardon; he gives him faith, and hope, and love; and, by grafting him, like a living branch, into the true vine, enables him to bear much fruit to the glory of God. And since every thing good in him comes from divine teaching, is it not absolutely necessary that he should be taught of God?

If you will consider all these authorities together, I hope they will convince you, my brethren, that there is a necessity for your being taught of God: for by nature you are ignorant of all spiritual and divine things; and you cannot, by any means in your own power, attain to the knowledge of them: the arts and sciences can give you no assistance. It is a matter of fact, that they never did, and the scriptures declare that they never can, help any man to discern the things of the Spirit of God. The natural man, while he remains such, be he ever so learned, *cannot* know them. And how, then, can he ever attain any ideas of them, but by divine teaching? If this evidence has convinced you, you are prepared to follow me in my second inquiry, which relates to the manner in which God teaches his people.

His established method is by the word, and by the Spirit. In all divine teaching, these two go together; the word, and the Spirit explaining and applying the word. The word is the whole will of God, which he revealed to be the means of bringing sinners from darkness to light, from sin to righteousness, and from the power of Satan unto God, and unto the kingdom of his dear Son, here in grace, and hereafter in glory. These great things are spoken of the written word; for it is able, according to the apostle, to make a man wise unto salvation: but then the quickening Spirit must accompany the hearing, or reading of it, or else you will never find in it this saving wisdom. It is only a dead letter, unless the living Spirit animate it: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The word is the means in the hand of the Spirit, of beginning, carrying on, and perfecting, the life of God in the soul. When the Spirit works in it, and by it, he makes it effectual, through his mighty operation, to build up and to perfect the man of God. He works in the word; for the Spirit is received in it, as the apostle shows, 2 Cor. iii. 8, where he calls the preaching of the gospel, "the ministration of the Spirit," that by which the Spirit was administered and given, and he says to the Galatians, that, by this hearing of faith (which hearing was of the word of God) they received the Spirit; Gal. iii. 2. And being received, he enlightened their minds and opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures; and thereby he wrought that faith in them which cometh by hearing; for faith is his gift. It is called, Gal. v. 22, "the fruit of the Spirit;" one of the fruits produced in the heart by his grace; upon which account he is called "the Spirit of faith;" 2 Cor. iv. 13. And when he has thus wrought in the word, he then works by it, and helps the believer to act faith upon it. The Holy Spirit puts it into his heart to desire the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby. And he does grow, and is nourished up, as Timothy was, in the words of faith, when he is enabled by the same Spirit to act faith upon the word; for then the word preached profits him, when he can mix faith with it—when faith and the word, like two fluids of the same properties, readily mix together, and closely incorporate. Thus the word nourishes him in the inner man, and he grows thereby. The Spirit applies it, and renders it effectual to

the promoting of every gracious purpose for which it was revealed: and by its means he makes the man of God wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Jesus Christ.

This is the usual andcommon way in which God fulfils the text. He teaches his children spiritual and divine things by his word, as explained and applied by his Spirit: which two cannot be put asunder. The word is the eye, and the Holy Spirit is the light shining upon it. Now, a man cannot see without eyes; and, having eyes, he cannot see without light. So, if you have the word without the Spirit, you have eyes without light; and if you have the Spirit without the word, you have light, but no eyes to see it: the word and the Spirit, therefore, must go together. To expect that the Spirit will teach you without the word, is rank enthusiasm, as great madness as to hope to see without eyes: and to expect that the word will teach you, without the Spirit, is as great an absurdity as to pretend to see without light; and if any man says, that the Spirit teaches him to believe, or to do, what is contrary to the written word, he is a mad blasphemer. God has joined the word and the Spirit; and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

Convinced of these things, have you, my brethren, reduced them to practice? Do you go with humility to the word of God to be taught? And do you find that instruction from it of which you stand in need? Perhaps you say, you do read it, but you find it very difficult: it is so hard to be understood, that it is for the most part to you a sealed book. This is a very general complaint; but what is the cause of it? Certain it is that this scripture cannot be broken—"All thy children shall be taught of God." The fault is not in God, nor yet in his word. Surely, then, it is in yourselves. Either you have not been deeply convinced of your own blindness in spiritual things, and therefore are not practically persuaded of the necessity of the word; or you have not looked up to the Holy Spirit for his divine teaching, praying him, in the prophet's words, "Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law:" for until he open your eyes and enlighten them, you cannot see any of the wonders contained in the book of God. Consider these points, then, and examine them closely. Be faithful, my brethren, to your own souls, and be not afraid to discover the true ground of your complaint. Have you been led to read and to hear the word of God under a strong sense of your darkness and blindness without it? And do you always seek the grace of the Holy Spirit to explain and to apply it? The first of these is absolutely necessary; because you will not ask wisdom of God, until you be convinced you lack it. And you will ask it with more or less earnestness in proportion to the sense you have of your want of it; so that, when you are made deeply sensible of your great ignorance, then you will become very humble and teachable. This is the proper disposition of mind which the Holy Spirit must work in you, both before and under divine teaching, and the consideration of which was the third particular I proposed to speak to.

Divine teaching is absolutely necessary for the learning of divine things, and God teaches his children by his word and by his Spirit. You may be convinced, my brethren, of these truths in speculation, but it is very difficult to bring them into practice. For such is the pride of the natural man, that he will not submit to be taught; no, not of God. He will exalt his own reasoning faculties above the wisdom of God's word, and above the teaching of God's Spirit. Although he has nothing to be proud of, being a creature made up of ignorance and sin, yet he is excessively proud; for pride is interwoven in his very frame and constitution. Our Lord says, pride proceeds from within, out of the heart, Mark vii. 21. It comes from a corrupt principle that is within us, in the heart; there it has taken deep root, and grown luxuriant, bringing forth a vast crop of proud looks, words, and works. Nothing but the almighty grace of God can pull down the high opinion which this proud creature entertains of himself, and which he will continue to entertain, until he be well disciplined into the knowledge of himself. He must be brought to see his ignorance, and to feel his guilt and misery, before he will be humble enough to apply to God for instruction. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is through his gracious operation that the proud self-sufficient sinner is made thoroughly acquainted with his ignorance and his sinful-

ness. The Holy Spirit gives him a view of himself in the glass of the law, and shows him, and makes him feel, the entire corruption of his nature, the blindness of his understanding, the depravity of his will, and the rebellion of his heart. The natural man is a bad scholar at this humbling lesson. He learns it very slowly, and with great pain and difficulty. The practice of it is like plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand: for his inbred sins are as dear to him as any member of his body. But the Holy Spirit so alarms him with his guilt, and with his danger, that, by degrees, he is brought heartily to wish for deliverance from his ignorance and from his sins; and thus he is made teachable. He becomes simple, and is willing to be taught of God. He is brought into a proper frame of mind to sit with Mary at the master's feet, hearing his word, in order to be enlightened with saving wisdom, and to be blessed with the comforts of saving faith. To persons of this humble, teachable temper, the scripture has made many sweet promises, both when they at first go to the school of Christ to learn his will, and also when they afterwards sit at his feet hearing his words, that they may do them. In general, it is said, that God giveth grace to the humble, and particularly grace to learn his will, as Psalm xxv. 9: "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." The meek are they who, with an humble and lowly spirit, receive the word of God, according to the apostle James, i. 21: "Receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls." They shall be taught of God, whom he has disposed to receive his word with meekness: he will ingraft it inwardly in their hearts, and will enable them to bring forth the precious fruits of it in their lives; and thus he will teach them his way. And then they will be able to keep up the words of Christ, gratefully acknowledging what God has done for them—"We thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." The things of God are still hid from the wise and prudent, from the wise and prudent ones of this world, who seek the knowledge of them by mere human learning, which, without grace, only puffs them up, and hinders them from seeing their want of divine teaching: from all such he hides the knowledge of spiritual things; but he reveals them to those whom the Holy Spirit has made humble and teachable. When such persons come with a meek temper to be taught of him, then he manifests to them the secrets of his kingdom: for he reveals them unto babes: unto them that blessed promise of the New Testament is fulfilled: "If any of you lack wisdom, and is humbled under the sense of his want of it, let him ask it of God, who giveth unto all askers liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him," James i. 5.

This, then, is the proper disposition of mind with which the Holy Spirit prepares the children of God for divine teaching, and by which he helps them to profit under it. He makes them humble, meek, and lowly in their own eyes, and desirous of being taught of God. To such persons he giveth grace to understand the word, to apply it, and to be edified by it. To those whom he has humbled he giveth his grace, because they will take no merit to themselves, but will ascribe the glory of what they learn to their divine teacher, and use it to the praise of the glory of his grace. You are, I hope, convinced of these great truths, but perhaps some of you do not see clearly how you are to attain this humble, teachable disposition. Are you convinced of your own want of it? If you are, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He has begun to make you sensible of your ignorance; and he must prepare you to receive instruction, as well as give it you. The desire to be taught of God cometh from him, as well as the teaching itself. He must work in you, both to will and to do: for it is written, Prov. xvi. 1. "The preparations of the heart in man are from the Lord." If there be any preparations in your heart to be taught of God, this is not from yourself; it is from the Lord, and is expressly ascribed to him, Gal. v. 23, where meekness is mentioned among the other fruits of the Spirit: that meekness whereby we receive the ingrafted word, is the fruit of his grace in the heart. Apply to him for it, and he will make you an humble, teachable scholar in the school of Christ; and when he has thus disposed you to give him all the glory of teaching you, then to you his promise shall be fulfilled, and you shall be taught of God.

From what has been now offered, the doctrine of the text is, I hope, made plain and clear: if scripture authority can convince, and if matter of fact can determine the point, they give in full evidence for the necessity of divine teaching, which is further confirmed from the established method in which God teaches his children. He revealed his word for their instruction; and his Spirit still accompanies the hearing or reading of it, and renders it effectual to the purposes for which it was revealed. He still, by his grace, prepares the sinner's mind to receive it, by convincing him of his ignorance of the things of God, by bringing him with an humble, teachable temper to learn them from the word of God, and then he works faith in the sinner's heart by the word, and helps the believer to act faith upon the word of God's grace, which is able to build him up, and to give him an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. These particulars have been established upon express passages of holy scripture; and what effect, my brethren, has our present consideration of them had upon you? Has it been the means of showing any of you how much you stood in need of divine teaching? Has it stirred up fervent desires in any of you for the teachings of God's Spirit? If neither of these good effects followed, what is the cause which hindered? If you believe the scripture to be the word of God, you cannot deny the doctrine. No words can be plainer than these written in the prophets: "They shall be ALL taught of God." If all are not to be taught of God, how do you understand the words? Do you think they speak only of the apostles and primitive Christians, to whom they were fulfilled, but we are not now to expect their accomplishment? This is the opinion of many persons, but it is quite unscriptural. The 54th chapter of Isaiah, as explained by an infallible interpreter in the New Testament, treats of the Gentile church in the last days, of which it is said, verse 13, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord;" ALL, without exception; all God's children among the Gentiles in every age shall be taught of the Lord. To the same purpose the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxxi, speaking of the new covenant which was to be established in the last days, declares, from the mouth of God, ver. 34: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord." This promise belongs to the new covenant, under which God himself engages to teach his people, and they all, from the least to the greatest, shall know the Lord. And when our blessed Saviour, in the text, referred to these and such-like promises, which are written in the prophets, he made no limitation, but said, "they shall be all taught of God;"—*all*, in every age of the church, who are made sensible of their want of divine teaching, and look up to heaven for a divine teacher, shall be taught of God. Certainly these passages cannot be so far wrested and tortured as to make them speak for divine teaching in one age of the church only. How can you, with any appearance of truth, fix a limited sense to these universal propositions—ALL thy children shall be taught of the Lord—they shall ALL know me, from the least to the greatest; for they shall be ALL taught of God—All were to be taught by him—all his children; therefore his children now have the same promise of divine teaching which the primitive Christians had; for the promise is to us, and to our children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Since, then, the scripture so clearly confutes this absurd and wicked opinion, do you, my brethren, give it up, and acknowledge the necessity of divine teaching? If not, what other objection have you against the doctrine? Have you been used to think that it carried with it an air of enthusiasm? I know many persons look upon it in this light. If any of you do, pray tell us what you mean by enthusiasm? For it seems to us only a bad name given to the best thing. At this day the knowledge of vital and experimental religion is so far lost, that whenever the generality of our people hear it spoken of, they do not understand it; and what they do not understand, they reject under the odious name of enthusiasm; so that this name does not stand for any bad properties in the thing to which they apply it, but only signifies their dislike of it. And if they express their dislike by a hard name, what hurt can that do? Can it really turn the words of truth and soberness into enthusiasm? Can that be

enthusiasm, which believes God to be a faithful promise-keeping God, and that his word cannot be broken? What! is it enthusiasm to desire to be taught of God, and to ask wisdom of him, after he has commanded his children to ask it, and has engaged to teach it to them? Surely, no. God's promises must be fulfilled, and they who seek their accomplishment cannot be disappointed. He hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets, that all his children shall be taught of God; and heaven and earth shall pass away, before one tittle of these words shall fail. Men and brethren, what do you think now of this objection, which wants to make God a liar, for promising to teach his children, and which treats them as enthusiasts who expect to be taught of him? Certainly you cannot defend such a blasphemous opinion. Well, then, the way is farther cleared for a favourable reception of the doctrine; and do you indeed receive it? Perhaps you assent to it. But what sort of an assent do you give? Is it active and operative? If not, what will it avail? You will learn none of the things of God, by simply believing that God does teach them to his children. You must ask, if you would have: you must seek, if you would find that wisdom which cometh from above. And you must ask with earnestness, and seek with diligence, not as if you could thereby merit, but to express your wants and your humility. The divine direction in this case is, Prov. ii. 3, 4, &c., "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;" not asking faintly, but crying aloud, and lifting up the voice through the fervency of the desire after wisdom; and "if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;" seeking with as great pains, and searching with as constant application, as ever worldly man took to enrich himself; "then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: for the Lord giveth wisdom:" he giveth it to every one who seeks with humble diligence.

These are words of comfort to you who desire to be taught of God, and who are seeking of him the knowledge of divine things. Seek, as he has directed you, and you shall find. He will teach you, because he has made you teachable. He has already taught you one lesson, which is, perhaps, the hardest you have to learn. He has convinced you of your entire ignorance of divine things. You no longer take up your rest in the fancied abilities of nature, but are consulting the word of God, and praying for the teachings of the Spirit of God. This is the appointed way to receive instruction. And if you wait in his way, he who directed you to the way will meet you and instruct you in it. Only remember, that his glory, being the motive and end of all his dealings with men, must be your motive and end in learning divine things. You must have a single eye to his glory in asking knowledge of him; and what he gives, you must use to his glory. His glory must be promoted by all that he teaches you: and therefore you must come to learn of him *humble*, under a continual sense of your ignorance and unworthiness, and *meek*, disposed like a new-born babe to receive the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby; and you must be *a diligent scholar*; you must read much, and pray more; yea, you must watch in prayer with all perseverance, and then the promise, which wisdom itself has made, shall be fulfilled to you, Prov. viii. 34: "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." He that watches and waits thus, is blessed: for God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, will shine into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What thanks can we render unto God for his exceeding grace, who still shines into the hearts of his children? Glory be to his great name! there are many among us who have reason to praise him for his divine teaching. They have found him faithful to fulfil his promises: for he has opened their blind eyes, and has led them into the knowledge and belief of the truth. Daily are they magnifying the riches of his infinite love, which has brought them out of darkness into his marvellous light, and has translated them out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of his dear Son. These persons are witnesses for God, and can set to their seal that he still teaches his children by his word, and by his Spirit: for they have been illuminated with the true knowledge and understanding of his word, and by their living they set it forth, and show it accordingly.

This is the happy state of so many of you as are real Christians. You have experience of the truth of the text, and know it to be an undoubted matter of fact. My Christian brethren, what return will you make to your divine teacher for the comfortable lessons which he has taught you? What less can you do, than praise him with your lives, as well as with your lips? Praise him for what you have already learnt, and continue humbly to wait on him for your growth in knowledge. Remember that the new man which you have put on is to be renewed in knowledge day by day. The spirit of wisdom is to help you to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is your privilege; and it is your interest to make a constant use of it. The wisest of us know but little of what is to be known, therefore you should be diligent in your attendance upon the means appointed of God for your teaching. Read the word, and meditate in it day and night; and when the Holy Spirit explains and applies it, then it will be a lantern unto your feet, and a light unto your paths. Pray over the word. Prayer will digest it; and the prayer of faith, mixed with it, will make it nourishing and strengthening to the inner man. And thus you will grow in grace, and be renewed in knowledge; the understanding will be renewed with still clearer views of spiritual things; the heart, no longer prejudiced against them, will be renewed with a more determinate choice of them; and the affections will be renewed with a more hearty love, and a fuller enjoyment of them. Hereby your sanctification will be carried on, and you will be renewed, day by day, in true holiness, after the image of him that created you.—Having therefore these privileges, dearly beloved brethren; having such a teacher, and such things to learn of him; having the Spirit of the Most High God to teach you all things, which belong to your present peace, and to your eternal glory; oh, what diligence should you use in attending upon the means, by which your divine teacher has promised to instruct you! In them be ye constantly found waiting—waiting with humble, teachable tempers—and praying for the blessing of God upon the use of his appointed means. And while you thus continue to wait upon God, he will continue to teach you. He has promised it to his children: and he cannot lie. He will make you wise unto salvation.

Having thus exhorted you, my Christian brethren, to make a diligent use of the great privilege of the new covenant, I have nothing further to offer, but my prayers. May he that heareth prayer send down his blessing upon what has been now spoken. May "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." Oh may our God manifest these great truths to your understandings, and give you the sweet experience of them in your hearts, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, until you see him face to face; and then shall you know, even as also you are known. To this perfect knowledge and ever-blessed fruition of God may the Lord Jesus bring you all by the ministry of his word, and by the teachings of his Spirit, that you may be for ever happy in giving thanks and praise to the three divine persons in one Jehovah, to whom the church in earth and heaven ascribes all glory in time and in eternity. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

DISCOURSE II.

UPON THE MORAL LAW.

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good:—Romans vii. 12.

THE great Creator and possessor of heaven and earth hath an indisputable authority to make laws for the government of his creatures, and to require their obedience. Since every thing that they have is received from his hands, and held under him at his pleasure, it therefore behoves them to inquire upon what terms they hold it. And if God has given them any laws, it is their duty to study them, and their interest to obey them. If there be any sanctions to enforce these laws, any rewards or punishments, they should inquire where these things are to be known, and by what means discovered, that they may obtain the reward and escape the punishment.

Whenever a serious unprejudiced person desires to be satisfied in these points, which so nearly concern his present peace of conscience and his future happiness, he will soon be convinced that God has made a gracious provision for his instruction. God has opened his mind and will in this matter. He has recorded his laws, and published them. The sacred volume of divine statutes is in our hands, and in our mother tongue. It is so very short, that none can want time to peruse it; and it is so very plain and intelligible, as to the rule of duty, that none can plead ignorance. He that runs may read it, and the simple may understand it, and learn knowledge; for, upon a very cursory view of this divine treatise, it will appear, that there are three distinct bodies of law mentioned in it; namely, the moral law, the ceremonial law, and the law of faith. We are all highly concerned to inquire into the nature of these laws; and therefore I purpose, through God's assistance, to inquire into the scope and design of each of them. At present I shall confine myself to the moral law, which alone is spoken of in my text. The apostle is treating of its usefulness to discover the sinfulness of sin: "I had not known sin," says he, "but by the law;" the law must first lay down a rule before it can be known what sin is, which is the transgression of that rule: "For I had not known lust," and that the very first rising and motion of evil in the heart was a sin, "unless the law had said, thou shalt not covet." This is the law of the tenth commandment: from whence it is very evident that St. Paul is here treating of the moral law, which is of such perfect purity, as to reach to the desires and covetings of the heart, and which, by restraining them, makes them appear more sinful, and grow more outrageous. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence: for without the law sin was dead," although it be in us, yet it is not perceived, until it be held before the holy spiritual law of God, and then it begins to stir and rage: for as it follows, "I was once alive without the law," says the apostle; when I knew not the law I thought myself alive, my conscience never troubled me, nor did I apprehend the deadly nature of sin; "but when the commandment came," when I began to understand the commandment in its spiritual nature, and it came to my conscience, and was applied with a divine power to my heart, "then sin revived, and I died;" I found myself dead in trespasses and sins: "for the same commandment which was ordained unto life was found to be unto me unto death; but sin took occasion by the commandment," not through any fault in the commandment, but entirely through my own fault, "deceived me, and by it slew me. What shall we say, then? Is the law and the commandment sin? God forbid. The law is holy," all the fault is in us, who abuse the law, "and the commandment is holy, and just, and good." The occasion of the words and the context, thus in part opened and explained, may help us to determine,

First, What the moral is.

Secondly, Whether it be still in force.

Thirdly, Whether we have all kept it; and if not,

Fourthly, What is the penalty due to the breach of it; and then I shall draw

some practical inferences from these particulars. And may the Spirit of the living God apply what shall be spoken. May he enlighten all your understandings with a clear view of the spiritual nature of the moral law, that by it you may be brought to the knowledge of sin, and to see and to feel your want of a Saviour. Under the teachings of this good Spirit let us consider,

First, What the moral law is. I define it to be the holy, just, and good will of God made known and promulged to his creatures in all these particulars, wherein he requires their perfect obedience, in order to their happiness. The law is the discovery of his will: for the almighty Creator and sovereign Lord of heaven and earth governs all his works and creatures according to the good pleasure of his own will. His will is the absolutely perfect law of the natural world. He hath given to the inanimate works of his hands a law which shall not be broken. The active powers in nature shall work, and passive matter shall obey by an unalterable rule, until the heavens be folded up like a scroll, and the earth and all the works therein shall be burnt up. And his will is as absolute a law to his rational creatures as to the natural agents; because he can enact no laws but what partake of his own adorable perfections. His law is his will made known. It is a copy of his infinitely pure mind. It is a fair transcript of his holiness, justice, goodness, and of every other divine attribute; for by the law he discovers to his creatures what it is his will they should be and do, in order to preserve his favour. He would have them holy, just, and good, and the law makes known to them the rule of their obedience; by an exact conformity to which they are holy, just, and good. The will of God revealed in the law is holy, and conformity to it is holiness. Holiness, in the Old Testament language, signifies a separation from impurity, and when applied to the divine nature, it rather expresses what God is not, than what he is. It is a negative idea, denoting an entire separation from every thing which can defile. Holiness in God excludes all possibility of pollution. In him there neither is, nor can be, the least impurity. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity. He cannot even look upon any thing which is in the least unclean: for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Now, the law is an exact copy of God's holiness. It is the outward discovery of his most holy mind and will, informing his creatures how perfectly pure they must preserve themselves, if they would preserve his favour. The law discovers to them what God is, and shows how like him they ought to be in holiness. And since God cannot behold the least impurity, consequently his law cannot, because it is his mind and will revealed concerning this matter. He will not suffer any deviation from his law, no, not in thought; for the language of the law is positive and express out of the mouth of the supreme lawgiver himself—"Be ye holy, for I am holy." And are you, my brethren, thus holy? This should be a matter of close examination. Are you what the law requires you to be? Do you look upon the law as perfectly, infinitely holy in itself, even as holy as God is; and have you considered sin as an offence against the holiness of God and of his law, even such an unpardonable offence, that you could never make the least satisfaction for it? It is very evident these things are not well understood, because the practice of mankind shows what low ideas they entertain of them. What makes sin appear light and little, and some offences small? Is it not because sinners are ignorant of the absolutely perfect holiness of the law? And after they have broken it, how mean an opinion have they of its holiness, when they think that a little sorrow, and some few tears, that repentance and amendment can make them holy, and satisfy the demands of the broken law? If any of you entertain these unworthy ideas of God and of his law, you should consider that, although God require you to be perfectly holy, yet he can require nothing of you but what is just. The law is just, as well as holy; just in all its demands, and just in the rule of its process in rewarding obedience and punishing transgression. The scripture word for justice is taken from human affairs, and from thence is applied to divine. In the first ages of the world, money was paid and received by weight; and he who kept an even balance in paying and receiving was a just man. His justice consisted in keeping the scales even, in weighing all things with an equal balance, and in giving and taking only what was lawful and right. Now, the

law holds this balance of justice in its hands, that it may prove the Judge of all the earth does right, and will be glorified in all that he requires of his creatures; for the holy obedience which he demands of them is a just obedience. He had a sovereign authority to require it, and he gave them power to pay it him, and therefore they could not complain of any injustice, if he should inflict the punishment threatened to the disobedient, any more than if he should bestow the reward promised to the obedient. Thus the law is just. It is the exact copy of God's justice, and is as perfectly just as God is. It can no more require or do an unjust thing, than God can; for the law only discovers what is the infinitely just mind and will of God concerning the behaviour of his creatures. The law says, "Do this, and thou shalt live. Transgress this, and dying thou shalt surely die." This is the will of the supreme lawgiver, and his justice is engaged to see the honour of his law maintained, as well in punishing transgression with death, as in rewarding obedience with life. The law cannot possibly do any injustice, because it is directed by the unerring will of God. God, and his will, and his law, are alike just; for it is written in the law, Deut. xxxii. 4: "The Lord's work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

All his ways and dealings with the children of men are perfectly just, and they are also good. His law is good. It partakes of the goodness of its divine author, inasmuch as it tends to promote the welfare and happiness of his creatures. The creature was made to show forth the glory of its great Creator, and the law was the rule by which it was to walk, in order to promote his glory; and in this holy walking there was all good to be met with. It was the way of pleasantness, and the path of peace. It preserved the assurance of the divine favour, afforded a perpetual feast of conscience, and gave sure and certain hopes of a glorious immortality; for Moses thus describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doeth these things shall live by them. If he do all the things written in the book of the law, he shall live unto God, and shall live with God. He shall enjoy a life of happiness here in the love and communion of God, and he shall enjoy an endless life of glory. Surely then the law is good; since the keeping of it would have produced all good, and since the transgressing of it has brought all the evil upon man which he can suffer in time and in eternity. Consider, my brethren, how good the law is from that deluge of evil which came in upon the breach of it. When the Lord God, at the end of his six days' works, surveyed all that he had made, behold it was very good. There was then no evil of any kind to afflict either body or soul; but by sin the body became subject to sickness, pain, and death, and the soul to guilt and misery; and in the next life, both body and soul were subject to the worm that never dieth, and to the fire that never shall be quenched.

Such is the goodness of the law. It is the all-wise provision which God has made for his own glory, and for the happiness of his creatures to whom he has published it. He made it known to our first parents in paradise. It was their rule of action, while they stood in the likeness and image of God. They had no opposition, then, to his good and acceptable and perfect will; but the understanding had a clear view of it; the will chose it, and the heart loved it, and they were able to do it with all their mind, and with all their strength. And when sin entered into the world, the will of God was not changed, nor his law repealed. The law was in full force from Adam to Moses, in whose time the Lord God recorded it with the most awful majesty on Mount Sinai, and engraved it with his own hands upon two tables of stone. And it stands unrepealed to this day; promising life to obedience, and threatening death to transgression.

Since, then, the law has been properly promulged, a holy, just, and good law, that altereth not, let us hear what it requires. It is the will of the lawgiver, that he who doeth the things written in the book of the law shall live by them. But then he must do all things, without exception. He must not fail in any one point. If he will enter into life, he must keep all the commandments. He must be universally holy, just, and good, as the law is. If he ever receive

the promised reward, he must perform the condition; that is, he must pay the law perfect uninterrupted obedience with every faculty of soul and body, in their utmost strength and vigour; for it cannot suffer any transgression; but for the least inflicts the threatened punishment.

This is an essential property of the moral law. Upon the very first offence it cuts the sinner off from all claim to the promised reward, and, as to any thing that he can do, cuts him off for ever. It is not in his power to make himself innocent again. Having once failed in his obedience, the law knows nothing of mercy, cannot accept the greatest repentance, nor be satisfied with the deepest sorrow for what is past; but immediately passes sentence according to what is written: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." If you fail in one single instance of obedience, you do not continue to perform all things, but fall under the curse of the broken law, and are as much liable to punishment, though not in the same degree, as if you had failed in every instance. In which sense the words of St. James are to be understood: "He that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all."

I have now gone through the several parts of the definition before given of the moral law, and it appears to be the holy, just, and good will of God made known and promulged to his creatures in all those particulars wherein he requires their perfect obedience, in order to their happiness. Since this is the case, it highly concerns every one of us to inquire whether we be under an obligation to keep this law; which is the second particular I proposed to consider; namely,

Whether the moral law be still in force, and still requires of them who expect to be saved by it perfect unsinning obedience. And upon the first proposal of this question, it would occur to every attentive person, that the law, being as holy, just, and good as God is, can no more admit of any variableness, or shadow of turning, than God himself can. He says, "I change not:" and how, then, can his law, which is the discovery of his mind and will, be changeable? Man may change; but the law is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It altereth not. If man does not keep it, it will lose none of its honour. Justice will be glorified by supporting the holiness of the law, and by inflicting the deserved punishment on the transgressors of it. But let us consult the law and the testimony. The Psalmist says, Psalm cxi. 7, 8: "All his commandments are sure: they stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." ALL his commandments, not excepting one, are fixed upon a sure, immovable foundation: for they stand fast for ever and ever in full force, established by the unchangeable will of God, and are ordained in perfect harmony with all the divine attributes; being done in truth, which cannot lie, and uprightness which cannot err. To the same purpose, he says in another psalm, cxix. 160, "Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." These righteous judgments are the decrees of the moral law, and there is not one of them that can be repealed; but they shall all endure in full force for ever. Our blessed Saviour has thrown great light upon this subject. The whole moral law is summed up in the ten commandments, which he has reduced to these two—the love of God and the love of our neighbour: on these two commandments, says he, hang all the law and the prophets; for love is the fulfilling of the law, and love never faileth; consequently the law of love can never fail, but its debt of gratitude will be paying, and happy is he who shall be paying it to all eternity.—Thus the moral law stands established by the authority of our divine teacher. In his sermon upon the mount he reforms the abuses and false comments which the scribes and pharisees had put upon the moral law; and he begins with this remark, Matt. v. 17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;" to fulfil the law by paying it infinitely perfect obedience, and by being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: and by this active and passive obedience he showed that it was easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than that one tittle of the law should fail. If the law could have abated any thing of its demands, there would have been no necessity for Christ's fulfilling it by his

obedience and death. But the law was unalterable. It could not be satisfied with any obedience, but what was absolutely holy, just, and good; and as all men had failed in paying it this obedience, they must therefore have been punished in their own persons, unless God, out of the riches of his wisdom and grace, had found out a way, by which the honour of his law might be advanced, and yet the sinner might be saved: and that was by sending his Son to fulfil the law. He was equal to this work; because he was God, equal with the Father, and he took our nature, and God and man were united in one Christ, that he might be capable of doing and suffering, and meriting in an infinite degree. Accordingly, in the fulness of time, he stood up in the place of sinners, and therefore he became liable to do and to suffer whatever law and justice demanded, that, having magnified the law, by obeying its precepts, and made it honourable by suffering its penalties, the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them who should believe on him to everlasting life: but the law is still in force to condemn every one who does not savingly believe on him, and will be for ever in force to inflict the deserved punishment.

It is evident, then, that the moral law stands to this day unrepealed. Although man may be changed from what he was at first, yet the law is not. It is still the holy, just, and good will of God requiring perfect obedience. And when the holiness of the law is violated, the justice of God is bound to see the sanctions of the law executed upon the disobedient; and the divine goodness cannot plead an arrest of judgment, because it is a good law which is broken, and therefore it is a good thing to see that the transgressors of it be paid the wages of sin.

My brethren, are not these very alarming truths? and ought they not to suggest to every one of you such reflections as these? What, am I under the law, bound to keep it with a perfect unsinning obedience? Can the law abate nothing of its demands, but must I love God always, and with all my mind, heart, soul, and strength, and my neighbour as myself, if I hope to enter into life by keeping the commandments? Surely then I ought to examine, whether I have always loved God and my neighbour, as the law requires. If these be the thoughts of your hearts, then you are prepared to follow me to a serious consideration of the third head of discourse, namely,

Whether we all have kept the moral law. Its demands are very great. It will not accept of any obedience, unless it be continual. You must continue, without the least interruption, to do all things that are written in the book of the law. And have any of you walked with a steadfast course in the way of the commandments, without once turning aside? Consult conscience. Does it not accuse? Consult scripture. Does it not say, "ALL we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way?" leaving the way of God's commandments.

The law also requires spiritual obedience. It reaches to the inmost thoughts and intents of the heart. You must never have one sinful thought in you, if you expect life from your keeping the law: for the law is spiritual. It searches the heart and the reins, and strikes at the very first motion or rising of sin. One sinful desire cuts you off from legal righteousness, as much as ten thousand sins: for it is written, "Thou shalt not covet;" and he that covets offends in one point, and therefore is guilty of all.

Besides, the law is perfect, perfectly holy, just, and good: for it is the will of God, and can no more suffer the least iniquity in its sight, than God himself can. It will abate nothing of absolutely perfect obedience. All the strength and all the mind, every faculty of soul and body is to be exerted, and with their utmost vigour, in the observance of the law. The heart too is to love it, and the affections are to be delighted with obeying it.

This is what the law demands of every one of you. It will have a continual, a spiritual, and a perfect love of God, without one thought ever arising in opposition to his holy will; and the love of your neighbour must be like the love of yourself. And does any man or woman keep the law in this manner? Do any of you? Certainly you cannot suppose that you have never broken the law, because you have just now declared the contrary out of your own mouths. You have confessed, this day, and on your bended knees, before God, "We have

offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done: and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." And when you spake these words, did not your consciences assure you that they were true? For have you not offended against the holy law of God? and have not you left undone what it required, and done what it forbid? Surely you did not prevaricate with God when, in another part of the service, you confessed that you had broken all the commandments. The rubric says: "Then shall the priest, turning to the people, rehearse distinctly all the ten commandments: and the people, still kneeling, shall, after every commandment, ask God mercy for their transgressions thereof for the time past, and grace to keep the same for the time to come;" and accordingly, after every commandment you prayed God to have mercy upon you for breaking it, and to incline your hearts to keep it. And have you not all sinned, and come short of the glory of God, by robbing his law of its due obedience?

What! would you make me a breaker of all the commandments? says some self-righteous formalist: I never murdered any body, nor committed adultery. No? Had you never one angry thought or word against your neighbour? This is murder. Or did not one impure and unclean thought ever arise in your mind? This is sin, according to the spiritual law of God. You look at your actions in the glass of man's law, and, because you have not outwardly offended, you think you have kept the law of God. There is your mistake. Look at Matt. v. 21, &c., and at 1 John iii. 15, and you will see that anger and hatred are murder in the eye of God; and read Matt. v. 27, 28, where our Lord teaches you that one lustful look is heart-adultery. God regards the heart; and heart-sin is as much sin against his spiritual law as outward transgression: and when the formalist sees his heart naked and open, as God sees it, he will not pretend that he has not broken all the commandments, but will rather desire God to have mercy upon him, and to incline his heart to keep his laws.

If any of you refuse to be determined by these authorities, hear what the Lord God has declared concerning you; and his decree will, I hope, be decisive. He is represented, in the 14th psalm, as looking down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God. But they were all gone out of the way; they were altogether become filthy; there was none that did good, no, not one; there was not one of the children of men that did good and sinned not. We have, in the third chapter of the Romans, the apostle's comment upon this psalm. After having proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin, and transgressors of the law, as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one, legally righteous, he says, ver. 19: "Now, we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Thus God himself has declared that you have not done good, that you are under sin, and in his sight guilty. And what can you object to these scriptures? Sirs, are not you greatly alarmed at hearing them? for they come home to every one's case, and ought to reach every one's conscience. And what are the present apprehensions of your minds concerning them? Have you broken the holy law of God, and you know you have, and do you not dread the consequence of your transgression? What can tempt you to hope that you shall escape the threatened penalty? Has your sorrow for breaking the law, or your repentance, or your amendment, merit enough so far to undo the sin committed, as that law cannot demand, nor justice inflict punishment for it? Or have you some blind notions of absolute mercy in God, as if he would cease to be just, rather than not be merciful to you? Men and brethren, if any or all of these false notions tempt you to be secure under the breach of the law, and under the wrath of the almighty lawgiver, let us bring them to the standard of scripture, and inquire,

Fourthly, What is the penalty due to the breach of the moral law?

When God published his law, he enforced it with proper sanctions. He promised reward to the obedient—"Do this, and thou shalt live." And he threatened punishment to the disobedient—"In the day that thou transgressest, dying thou shalt surely die." This is the rule of God's process. If you keep the law, you

shall have the life promised. But if you trangress, you shall be alienated from the life of God, and subject to death, to the first and to the second death, to a death of nature, and to a death of grace; for both these kinds of death are the punishment of sin: "For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And besides this death of the body, there is a death of the soul—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die," Ezek. xviii. 4: it shall be alienated from the life of God for ever and ever, and shall suffer the vengeance of eternal fire; so that the broken law not only cuts you off from the fountain of life, but also pours out its curses, and inflicts real torments upon the unholy, the unjust, and the evil, according to the description in Rev. xxi. 8: "The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

These are the penalties which every transgressor of the law deserves, and these God has threatened to inflict. His will herein is unchangeable. His truth requires the performance of his threatenings. His justice is bound to see them inflicted. His holiness and goodness call upon justice for the immediate execution of the penalties due to sin. And how can the sinner escape? What can he do to deliver himself? He has nothing in his own power wherewith to satisfy the demands of law and justice. Suppose him sorrowful for his sin; that sorrow proves him guilty, and leaves him so. Say, he tries to repent; the law knows nothing of repentance; its language is, Do this, or thou shalt die. Grant, he amends his life for the future; yet, what becomes of his past sins? Is his doing part of his duty any satisfaction for neglecting part of it? The law makes no provision for any such groundless pleas, but insists upon perfect obedience, and for the least failure puts the sinner under the curse and under the wrath of God, and there leaves him to suffer the just punishment of his sin.

But some persons, perhaps, may object, if this be the case, What flesh can be saved? None; no, not one can be saved by keeping the law; for all have sinned and transgressed the law of God: therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

But still some may ask, Why then do you preach the law? Because it is a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. It teaches them the nature of sin, and convinces them of their want of a Saviour. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. iii. 20. and vii. 7. Men are secure and careless in sin until the law, that worketh wrath, reach their consciences; then they begin to know sin, and to feel the exceeding sinfulness of it: for it is the ministration of condemnation," 2 Cor. iii. 9. The law, spiritually understood and applied, convinces the sinner that he is a condemned creature, shows him in God's word the sentence past upon him, and makes him dread the execution of it. And thus it becomes to him "the ministration of death," 2 Cor. iii. 7; proving him to be guilty of sin, and to be deserving of death. The apostle's case is very common. I thought myself alive, says he, without the law: he had no doubt but he was alive to God, while he was a strict pharisee, but when the holy spiritual nature of the law was made known to him, he found himself to be dead in trespasses and sins. This, then, is the office of the law. It brings transgressors to the knowledge of sin, condemns them for it, and puts them under the sentence of death; and when the law has thus convinced them of their guilt and of their danger, they then find their want of a Saviour. But without this work of the law, they would not have been sensible that they stood in any need of him. If they were never sick, they would never send for the physician. If they were never brought to the knowledge of sin, they would never desire the knowledge of a Saviour. If they never found themselves under guilt and condemnation, they would never sue for his pardon, and would never ask life of him, unless they found that they deserved to die the first and the second death. For these reasons the law must be taught. It is the schoolmaster appointed of God to bring sinners unto Christ; and when the schoolmaster comes in the name and power of the divine Spirit, and convinces them of their distressed state and condition, and makes them sensible of their guilt and of their misery, then he brings them to Christ, earnestly to ask and

humbly to receive mercy from him, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

And now, men and brethren, let us hear this schoolmaster, who is sent from heaven to teach us a divine lesson. He speaks to you, ye careless and secure in sin, and denounces the anger of the almighty lawgiver against you. Oh! with what a terrible voice does he reveal the wrath of God from heaven against all your ungodliness and unrighteousness. There is nothing dreadful in earth or hell, nothing to be feared in time or in eternity, but what is included in this most awful sentence, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them," Deut. xxvii. 26. Have you done them? Have you done ALL that the law required? and in the perfect manner required? I dare appeal to your consciences. You may try to stifle their evidence, but they will speak; and do they not at this very time charge you with sin? You know that you have not kept all the law; and what then is the consequence? Why, the law pronounces you cursed; and it would make your ears tingle, and your heart melt within you, if you were to consider what is to be under the curses of the law, and to have the wrath of God abiding upon you for ever and ever. Have you no sense of these things, and no fearful apprehensions about your present condition? Is not conscience alarmed at the greatness of your danger? and do not the terrors of the law stir you up to flee from the wrath to come? If not, if all be quiet therein, while you hear the law of the most high God, which ought to convince you of your guilt, and to make you apprehensive of your misery, then you are indeed sleeping the sleep of death. O may the God of all mercy take pity on you, and awaken you! lest you should sleep on until the curses of the law be actually inflicted, and wrath come upon you to the uttermost.

Some persons may think it happy for them that they are not careless and secure in sin; for they endeavour to keep the law as well as they can; and God is a merciful God; he will forgive them when they do amiss. This is a common, but it is a very dangerous mistake: for it supposes that the law can abate something of its demands, and can accept of an imperfect obedience: whereas the law is the holy, just, and good will of God, which altereth not. It requires perfect and universal obedience, and, in case of the least transgression, condemns the sinner and passes sentence. If he plead that he never offended but in this particular instance, that is pleading guilty. If a man be indicted for murder, and the fact be proved upon him, and he be found guilty, and the judge pass sentence, what would it avail him if he should make this plea, that he had never been guilty of high-treason? The judge would observe to him that he was not accused of high-treason, but of murder, of which he was found guilty and condemned, and his not being a traitor was no reason why he should not be executed for being a murderer. So your not having broken this or that commandment cannot save you from the just sentence of the law, if you have broken any of them. Suppose you are not an adulterer, yet, if you are a murderer, you deserve to die, and to receive the wages of sin: "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law," James ii. 11.

But some will say, Shall we not be accepted, if we endeavour to keep the law as well as we can? No. The style of the law is, Do. It does not say, Endeavour to keep the commandment, but it speaks with authority, Do it, and do it perfectly, and in every point, and with all the mind, and with all the soul, and with all the heart, and with all the strength. Here is no room left for good resolutions, or good endeavours, but an actual performance of the whole law is demanded. The least failing or short-coming is a transgression, and therefore is an absolute forfeiture of legal righteousness, and of every blessing promised to the perfect keeping of the law.

Some persons go a little further than good endeavours, and think God will accept them for their sincere obedience: whereas the law has nothing to do with sincerity. When you come to be tried by the law, the only question will be, whether you have broken it, or not? If not, the promised reward is yours. You may claim it as your due: for to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of death. But if you have broken the law,

your sincere obedience cannot be accepted in the place of perfect obedience; because the law has made no provision for your case. It requires a continual performance of all its commands, and in a perfect manner; and if you fail, and then plead your sincerity in your favour, that is owning your guilt, and is a confession of your not having continued in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them; and therefore, as your sincere obedience is not perfect, it leaves you still under the curse of the law, and under the wrath of God.

There are other persons who think that there is some kind of absolute mercy in God, and that, although they have sinned, yet he is ready to forgive. But this is not the character of God as drawn in the law; for the law considers him as the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, having absolute authority to enact laws for the government of his creatures, over whom he presides with unerring justice, to see his laws carried into execution. Justice is the ruling attribute of the supreme lawgiver. As his laws are just, so are its sanctions. It is equally just in him to punish transgressors, as to reward the obedient; for the judge of all the earth cannot but do right, and distribute impartial justice. Whether he can show mercy to the guilty, is not the question; but whether he has made any provision in his law for showing them mercy: and he certainly has not. God is not described in the law as a God of mercy, but as a sovereign judge, whose wrath. and not whose mercy, is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

But if the lawgiver has made no promise in his law, that he will show mercy to sinners, yet will he not be prevailed on by their sorrow and tears, their repentance and amendment? There is not one word in the law to encourage a sinner to hope for mercy, because he is sorry for his sin. It is full of threatenings against the least offence, and for the least cuts the offender off from all claim to legal righteousness. When he is in this state, what merit is there in sorrow, that it should change the laws of the most high God, or what efficacy in tears, that they should cause him to be reputed innocent, who is in fact guilty? He has forfeited all right and title to the happiness which the law promised to obedience, and when he sees this, he grows sorry for what he has done amiss. So does a murderer, when found guilty, and condemned to suffer; but does the judge pardon him because he is sorry for his crime? By no means. But he gives signs of true sorrow. He weeps bitterly. Suppose he does, yet the law demands obedience, and not tears for disobeying. These tears flow from a sense of guilt; and if there were rivers of them they could not wash the stain of guilt out of the conscience; because the law has not ascribed any such virtue to them, as to accept of many tears for having offended, instead of unsinning obedience. And, granting he goes a step farther; he repents and amends. But what becomes of the broken law, and of the deserved penalty? Can simple repentance undo the sin committed? or can amendment for the future avert the penalty already deserved? No, these are things impossible. The law will have obedience or punishment; and justice is engaged to see that the law be obeyed, and the threatened punishment inflicted; and therefore, after you have disobeyed, the law can allow no place for repentance, nor no way to escape punishment, although you seek it carefully with tears.

But if the law cannot show the offender mercy, does it leave him without hope? Yes. It can show him no mercy, nor does it give him any hope. It convinces him of sin, condemns him for it, and sentences him to the first and to the second death.

What! must he despair, then! Of being able to attain mercy by any means in his own power, he must despair—despair of working out for himself such righteousness as the law demands—despair of escaping, by any sorrow or repentance or his, the punishment which justice is bound to inflict. And when he finds himself in this guilty and helpless state, then will he be glad to hear of a Saviour. Blessed be God, there is salvation for him who despairs of being saved by the law. To him the gospel offers a free pardon. When he flies to the gospel, seeking to be saved by free grace, then there is mercy for him, and plenteous redemption. When he cries out, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the curses of the broken law, and from the justice of an offended God? The

gospel points out unto him the victorious Saviour, who hath redeemed his people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them, and hath satisfied all the demands of his Father's justice, having made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. And therefore he can save to the uttermost. If there be any of you whom the broken law accuses, and whom justice is pursuing to inflict the threatened punishment, fly to this almighty Saviour, and you will find in him a safe refuge. He can save you from the condemnation of the law; for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. And he can deliver you from the stroke of justice; for who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, since it is God himself that justifieth them?

This is the great salvation set before you, who despair of being saved by the law. It is a free, full, and eternal salvation. He who has it to give, has graciously convinced you of your want of it, and has made you willing to receive it as a free gift. Ask it then of him, deeply sensible of your unworthiness, and of your helplessness, and he will incline his ear unto your petitions: for he never cast out the prayer of the poor destitute. Ask, and ye shall have the precious gift of faith, and great joy and peace in believing that you are redeemed from the curse of the law, and that you are enriched with the blessings of the gospel. You will be made the children of God, and will receive the adoption of sons through faith in Christ Jesus, and if sons, then you will be heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you; which may the Father reserve for you all, for the sake of his beloved Son, through the effectual grace of the Holy Spirit, that to the three persons in one Jehovah you may be happy in ascribing equal honour and glory, and blessing, and praise, for ever and ever! *Amen.*

DISCOURSE III

UPON THE CEREMONIAL LAW

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.—Song of Solomon, iv. 6.

After man had broken the moral law, and had fallen into a helpless state of guilt and misery, it pleased God to reveal the covenant of grace. As soon as the way to salvation was stopped by the law, he opened a new and living way by the gospel. The Messiah was promised, and the rites and ceremonies were instituted, which were to represent what he was to be and to do for the salvation of men. "Which things were a shadow, but the body, or substance, was Christ." They were expressive figures and shadows of his actions and sufferings, and in them the religion of the gospel was delineated to the senses of the believer. This law of ceremonies was revealed upon the fall, and afterwards republished in writing by Moses. It had God for its author, and was established by his divine authority, and therefore it deserves our particular consideration.

In my last discourse I endeavoured to explain the scope and design of the moral law, and to prove that, by its works, no flesh can be justified in the sight of God. The next body of law is the ceremonial, which preached salvation from the pains and penalties incurred by the breach of the moral law. It held forth this doctrine under a great variety of types and figures, and taught it in many plain passages. The words which I have read contain the Messiah's own sentiments of the subject. The commentators allow him to be the speaker, and he is addressing himself to the believer, with whom he holds sweet and spiritual discourse in this divine treatise. He particularly informs them where he vouchsafed his presence, and would be found of them that sought him, so long as the ceremonial law was in force. Until the day break, says he, until the day of my first coming in the flesh shall dawn, and the shadows flee away (the types and shadows of the law shall vanish), I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frank-

incense, to the mountain of the Lord's house, even to the holy hill of Sion, and there I will be spiritually present in the temple service; I will there give my blessing to the ordinances, and will make them the means of grace: whatever your wants may be, apply to me in these instituted means, and you will find an abundant supply: for, until the day break, and the shadows flee away, &c.

The consideration of this passage will, I hope, by the assistance of God, help us to comprehend the scope and design of the ceremonial law. And may the Holy Spirit, who inspired these words, accompany our present meditation upon them, that we may,

First, Clearly understand their true sense and meaning; and

Secondly, May be established in the doctrine which they contain.

There are many parts of the Song hard to be understood, especially by the unlearned and unstable, who wrest it, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. But the passage which we have now before us is very easy. There is no difficulty in it to persons who have a little acquaintance with the scripture manner of writing, which constantly uses and accommodates natural things to explain spiritual, suiting its instructions to man's present embodied state, in which he cannot see the things of grace but through the glass of nature. The language of the Old Testament is entirely of this kind. Every Hebrew word has a literal sense, and stands for some sensible object, and thereby gives us a comparative idea of some spiritual object. As this is the nature of the language, so is it also of the subject-matter of the book of Canticles. It is drawn up in the manner of a dialogue, in which outward and material things are used to represent inward and spiritual things. This way of writing is very abstruse to those who have not the senses of their souls exercised to discern the things of God, but to those who have, it is an easy book. He who runs may read it, if he has but a little acquaintance with the scripture language, and some of that love in his heart, of which this book treats: for it is a song of loves, setting forth the mutual affection between Christ and the believer, who is united to him by saving faith. And in the words of my text, Christ informs the believer where he might at all times find his presence. He would be spiritually present in the services and ceremonies of the temple. By these he would convey grace and strength to his faithful people, until his coming in the flesh.

Until the day break. The scripture mentions two days, by way of eminence, and distinguishes them by two of the greatest events which the Redeemer's love and power are to produce—the day of Christ's first coming, and the day of his second coming. The day of his first coming in the flesh is here spoken of—the day which Abraham earnestly desired to see, and which is often mentioned in the prophets under the expressions "of the day of the Lord, or the day of our God;" and sometimes it is very emphatically styled "that day;" that day's wonders raising it above all days from the beginning to the end of time. And, in the New Testament, our Lord calls it *my* day, the day of my incarnation, when I, Jehovah, should take a body of flesh, and God and man should be one Christ. This day many prophets and kings desired to see; for God manifest in the flesh was the foundation of their faith and hopes. They longed to see this day break, and to behold the sun of righteousness, with his saving and healing influences, arising upon the earth; and, when he did arise, we find those who were then looking for redemption singing his praises with grateful hearts: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, through whose tender mercy the day-spring from on high hath visited us:" they blessed God, because the substance was now to take place of the shadow, and all the legal ceremonies were to be succeeded by gospel realities. When the glorious day of Christ's appearance in the flesh was come, and the light of life was risen upon the earth, then

The shadows were to flee away. The legal ceremonies are called shadows in scripture, because they were the outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual objects. St. Paul says, the ceremonial law "had the shadow of good things to come," Heb. x. 1; of the good things which are now come to us by the advent of Christ; and it had the patterns and examples of heavenly things; every one of which had God for its author, and was instituted by him to be an apt figure, and to raise a just idea of some spiritual object; as Moses was admonished

of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. "For see," saith he, "that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Every rite and ceremony was a pattern of some heavenly object, the real existence of which the pattern proved, as a shadow proves the reality of the substance from which it is cast, and the resemblance and likeness of which is set before the eyes, as the shadow of a body is a representation of it. The scripture has expressly determined what all these shadows were to represent: for the apostle, speaking of them in Col. ii. 17, declares, "that they were the shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." Christ is the reality of all the shadows of the law; he is the body, and the substance, of whom they are the pictures. If you take away their reference to him, they cease to be examples and shadows of heavenly things; but if you suppose them to represent him and his actions, and sufferings, &c. then they answered many noble purposes, until he came in the flesh to fulfil them; for then these shadows were to flee away; one great end of their institution being answered. The observance of them was to be no longer in force; but they were to be entirely repealed and abrogated. However, until this blessed day should break, and these legal shadows should thus flee away, the text says, they were to serve a double purpose: they were, first, to be the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace given unto us, and ordained by Christ himself, to be, secondly, a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof. This is plainly implied in the last words of the text, in which Christ declares that, until the ceremonies were fulfilled by his coming in the flesh, he would be spiritually present in them.

I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Where was this mountain of myrrh? Was it not the place in which the Lord was present, until the shadows were fled away? And where was he present, but in the services of the ceremonial law, which could not be performed any where, when the text was spoken, but in the temple? There the Lord had put his name, and had sanctified the house by the presence of his glory. "I have chosen," says the Lord, 2 Chron. vii. 16, "and sanctified this house, that my name might be there for ever, and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually:" there will I receive the sacrifices which I have forbidden to be offered anywhere else; there will I accept of the prayers of the faithful offerer: and there will I dwell between the cherubim, with visible tokens of my divine presence and glory. As he chose the people of Israel, out of all the nations of the earth, to be his people, so he chose his sanctuary in Judah, and the holy hill of Sion to be his dwelling-place, manifesting his presence there in such a manner as he did nowhere else in the world; and therefore we may infer that, when Christ says, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, until the shadows flee away, he certainly means the mountain of the Lord's house. And the Hebrew word justifies this inference; for the word rendered myrrh is the very same root with Moriah, the mount upon which the temple stood. I will get me, says Christ, to the mountain of Moriah, and there will I dwell, because I have a delight therein. So that we have here a plain testimony of Christ's presence in the ceremonial services performed upon mount Moriah. In these he was to be found of them that sought him, until the day of his manifestation in the flesh. And the meaning of the word seems to me further to confirm this interpretation: for it signifies *bitterness*, what is bitter to the taste, and bitter to the spirit, grievous and hard to be borne; and what was there to be seen or done upon mount Moriah to render this its proper name? Look at the chief part of the temple service, and then judge. It consisted in making gifts and sacrifices for sin, in which you may behold a striking picture of the bitter sufferings of the Lamb of God. In the sacrifices were represented, every day, things more bitter than death, the shedding of his blood, and the taking away of his life. He made his soul an offering for sin, and to satisfy the infinite demands of law and justice. His agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion, show what bitter things the Father had written against him. These were represented in the roasting of the paschal lamb with fire, and in the eating it with bitter herbs. And when Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, and really underwent the fire of the Father's wrath, there never was any sorrow like

unto that sorrow, which forced him to cry out, in the bitterness of his soul, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

If all these circumstances be laid together, they will evidently determine the place of Christ's presence, while the ceremonial law was in force. He was spiritually present in the temple service, to render the sacrifices, and the other typical rites, the means of grace, and effectual to the ends for which they were instituted: for after the moral law was broken, there was no way to salvation, but faith in the promised Saviour; and the necessity of faith in him was taught by the services of the ceremonial law, as it is written, "through faith they kept the passover:" they acted faith upon Christ in the passover; they slew and roasted the paschal lamb with fire, and ate it with bitter herbs, knowing it to be a type of the future sacrifice of the Lamb of God, of the benefits of whose death they were then, through faith, partakers. They found his spiritual presence strengthening and refreshing their souls at the passover, as we do now at the Lord's supper; and they knew that, through his merits and mediation, their persons and their services were accepted to God the Father, which is, I think, the sense of the last words of the text,

I will get me to the hill of frankincense.

This is the same place mentioned before, only described by another name, to express a different property. Incense was, by divine command, a chief part of the temple service. As the sacrifices offered in the temple were to represent the death of Christ, so the incense there offered was to represent the sweet savour of his meritorious death, which alone could reconcile God to sinners, and could render them and their services well-pleasing in his sight; and therefore that rich perfume, mentioned Exod. xxx, which was the type of the sweet incense of Christ's merits, was forbidden, on pain of death, to be used upon any other occasion than in the service of God, and in any other place than in the tabernacle, at that time, and afterwards, in the temple. The command is, ver. 36, "Thou shalt put of it before the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy:" ver. 58, "Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people." This was to show that God the Father is seen to be propitious to sinners, only through the merits of his Son's sacrifice, and that he who seeks to be accepted in any other way or means shall die in his sins. The incense then was a type of Christ's meritorious death, and the hill of frankincense was the holy hill of Sion, upon which incense used to be offered, and a pure offering. The offering was that great sacrifice of the Lamb of God, shadowed out by all the sacrifices slain from the foundation of the world; and the incense was to represent the efficacy of his sacrifice. It is said of the typical offerings, that the Lord smelled a sweet savour; how much more was he pleased with the offering and sacrifice of Christ, which was indeed a sweet-smelling savour, acceptable and well-pleasing unto God?

But how was Christ present in the offering up of the incense? It was his institution, and he was spiritually present to render it effectual to the ends for which he instituted it. He appointed it to be one of the means of grace; for he taught believers, by this ceremony, that he could make them and their services acceptable to the offended Deity; and, by his Spirit, he gave them the comfortable knowledge of their acceptance. When, therefore, he mentions his presence on the hill of frankincense, it is as if he had said, When the high priest enters once every year, at the great feast of atonement, into the holy of holies, and there fumes the incense before the cherubim of glory, and sprinkles the blood before the mercy-seat, I will then enable believers to act faith upon my future fulfilling and realizing of this service: for, after my sacrifice upon earth, I will enter into the holy of holies, and will there plead my merits before the mercy-seat in heaven, and, by my all-prevailing intercession, will render the persons and the services of believers well-pleasing unto God the Father. Thus Christ was present upon the hill of frankincense; and there the faithful expected to meet with him. for, while the priest was offering up the incense in the temple, the people used to be at prayers without, hoping that the angel of the covenant, who had much in-

cense given to him to offer it up with the prayers of all the saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne, would make the smoke of the incense ascend up with their prayers before God. In this hope we find the whole multitude of the people (Luke i. 10.) praying without, at the time that Zacharias was burning the incense in the temple of the Lord.

From the sense and meaning of the words, as thus in part opened and explained, the following doctrine may be established. Upon the breach of the moral law, the ceremonial law was instituted to prefigure the promised Messiah, and his actions and sufferings, and to preach forgiveness of sins through him. Until the day of his coming in the flesh, the ceremonies served as shadows to raise ideas of him, and as means of grace to support the faith and hopes of his people: they were outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, in the very same manner as the sacraments are at present, signing and sealing to believers the benefits purchased by the obedience and sufferings of the Lamb of God. This is the doctrine which I purposed, under my second general head, to establish.

The whole volume of scripture considers the ceremonial law in this same point of view. It was the scope and design of the Old Testament to reveal to sinners the covenant of grace, and to teach them how they might attain pardon for their breach of the moral law. Upon the first breach of it, the Messiah was promised, and the rites and services of the ceremonial law were instituted, to keep up faith and hopes in him, until his coming in the flesh; for they showed what he was to be, and to do, and to suffer. The New Testament relates the accomplishment of the Old, proving Jesus of Nazareth to be the promised Messiah, and declaring how he did and suffered every thing prefigured by the types, and foretold by the prophets. Both Testaments, therefore, treat of one and the same subject, namely, of the way and method by which the transgressors of the moral law may be delivered from the guilt and punishment which they have incurred. This is the opinion of our church, in her sixth article: "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Jesus Christ." The everlasting life forfeited by the breach of the moral law is offered to mankind in the Old Testament as well as in the New, and offered by the same Saviour, Jesus Christ, and offered by the same gospel of the grace of God: for unto us, says the apostle, Heb. iv. 2, "was the gospel preached, as well as unto them." He is speaking of the Israelites, who, after their deliverance from Egypt, perished in the wilderness through unbelief; and he says, that what is preached unto us, was preached unto them. They had the same gospel which Paul preached; and what it was he thus informs the Corinthians: I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures. This is our gospel, and it was theirs under the Old Testament dispensation. Believers then had the same faith that we have, in the same Saviour. The gospel preached to them the coming of Christ, his sufferings and death for their sins, and his resurrection: they believed he would come, and we believe he is come. In this single circumstance their gospel differs from ours. Our reformers, in the second part of the homily upon faith, speaking of the fathers, martyrs, and other holy men, mentioned Heb. xi, have these remarkable words: "They did not only know God to be the Lord, maker, and governor of all men in the world; but also they had a special confidence and trust, that he was, and would be, their God, their comforter, aider, helper, maintainer, and defender. This is the Christian faith which these holy men had, and which we also ought to have, and although they were not named Christian men, yet was it a Christian faith that they had; for they looked for all the benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, as we do now. This difference is between them and us; that they looked when Christ should come, and we be in the time when he is come; therefore, saith St. Augustine, the time is altered and changed, but not the faith." Faith was always the same. Ever since the moral law was first broken, there has been but one gospel, which preached salvation by one Lord, and one faith.

If you ask, How was it preached to the holy men of old? It was revealed to them by many plain prophecies ("for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy") and by many significant types and expressive ceremonies; under which Christ was as clearly preached as he is under the sacraments of the New Testament: for all these were memorials, instituted on purpose to keep him in memory; and they were patterns serving as copies to convey ideas of their originals, according to what is written, Exod. xxv. 40. And look, says God to Moses, that thou make them, namely, the tabernacle and all its vessels, after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount; they were the patterns of heavenly things, as St. Paul, reasoning upon this passage, has assured us, Heb. viii. 5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle: for see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Here is a plain description of the scope and design of the ceremonial law. An infallible interpreter assures us, that it served for an example and shadow of heavenly things. Its ceremonies were examples to set these heavenly things before men's eyes, and to raise ideas of them; and they were shadows to delineate them, and to give an outward sketch of them; and they were patterns like a good plan or design, representing them clearly and distinctly. This was the nature of the types: they were instituted to prefigure the heavenly things which were to be in Christ, and which were to be derived from him to believers.

In this sense, Christ was present upon Moriah. He was the types and services. These were his representatives. They stood for him, and acted in his name, and by his authority were deputed to declare his gracious intentions towards the transgressors of the moral law: for they all preached Christ, and salvation through his infinitely meritorious sacrifice. The whole temple-service represented him in this light. for the temple itself was the type and figure of his body. Our Lord himself calls it so. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up," John ii. 19. But he spake, says St. John, of the temple of his body, of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man. And herein he spake agreeably to the well-known usage of scripture, which calls the type and the thing typified by the same name. The temple was the type of his body, and every part of its furniture was a type and figure of what was to be in the humanity of the incarnate God. All its vessels were apt figures and beautiful pictures of those divine graces which were in him, and which believers were to receive out of his fulness. The holy place represented what he was to do upon earth: the holy of holies represented what he was to do in heaven for his people. At the entrance of the holy place stood the laver, filled with water, with which the priests were to wash, when they went in and came out of the temple. This was to set forth the infinitely purifying virtue which was in Christ, and with which he was to cleanse sinners from the pollution of sin, as he says in the prophet: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you," Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Next to the laver stood the altar of burnt-offering, on which the blood of the sacrifice was offered; hereby was represented the all-meritorious blood of the Lamb of God, which alone taketh away the guilt of sin. On one side of the holy place stood the candlestick, with its lamps always burning to represent that divine light which came into the world, that he who followeth it should not walk in darkness, but should have the light of life. On the other side stood the table of shew-bread, the figure of that bread of God, which came down from heaven, and of which, if any man eat, he shall live for ever. At the upper end of the holy place, next the veil, stood the altar of incense, to represent the sweet-smelling savour of Christ's sacrifice, through faith in which the transgressors of the moral law are reconciled to God the Father, and rendered acceptable and well-pleasing in his sight.

The most holy place, or the holy of holies, was the figure of heaven; and what was done in it, once a year, by the high priest, was to represent what our great high priest does in heaven for us and for our salvation. This doctrine is very clearly taught in several parts of the epistle to the Hebrews. Thus we read that,

"into the second tabernacle went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people; the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was not yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present," Heb. ix. 7, 8, 9. And what the Holy Ghost signified by this service could not but be known, while the tabernacle and temple stood, because it was a figure for the time then present. The 9th chapter, and great part of the 10th, treat entirely of this subject. The high priest was the type of Christ, our great intercessor. His going in once a year into the holy of holies, was the figure of Christ's appearing once in the end of the world, and opening a new and living way for us into the holiest. His carrying blood to sprinkle upon the mercy-seat, and incense to fume before the cherubim of glory, was to represent Christ's pleading the merits of his blood at the throne of grace, which was an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well-pleasing and acceptable to the Holy Trinity. The high priests coming out of the holy of holies to bless the people, was the figure of Christ's coming from the holiest to bless his people with an everlasting blessing—"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

It appears, then, from all these authorities, that the ceremonial law preached Christ, and salvation through him, from the guilt and punishment incurred by the breach of the moral law. All its services prefigured him, and were lively and expressive pictures of what he was to be, and to do, and to suffer, in order to make an atonement for sin. His sacrifice for this purpose was represented by all the typical sacrifices: for without shedding of blood there was no remission; and it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins; therefore believers hoped for remission through his most precious blood, and sacrificed in faith, relying on the future offering of the Lamb of God: so that it was plainly the scope and design of the ceremonial law to preach remission of sins through the shedding of blood. When any person had offended, and his conscience accused him of sin, he was required to bring his sacrifice to the priest, and to lay his hands upon its head, and to confess his sins over it: after this its life was to be taken away, and its blood shed instead of the sinner's life. And this was to be done, even when a person had offended through ignorance. But in what did the merit of the sacrifice consist? Did its blood take away sin? No. It was not possible the blood of bulls and of goats should do that. The sacrifice was only a memorial instituted to bring the Messiah into mind, as if he had said, Do this in remembrance of me; remembering in every sacrifice the future sacrifice of the Lamb of God; and believers did remember him. When they ate of the paschal lamb, by faith they discerned the Lord's body, and enjoyed communion with Christ, our passover, as we do now at the Lord's supper. They found him present in the ordinances, according to his most true promise in the text. Until the day dawn, says he, the great day of my appearing in the flesh, and the shadows flee away, the shadows of the ceremonial law be realized and fulfilled in my life, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension; until these things be, I will be spiritually present upon mount Moriah, in the temple worship, and upon the hill of frankincense, to render the persons and the services of my people well-pleasing and acceptable unto God the Father.

Since, then, it was the scope and design of the ceremonial law to prefigure Christ under its expressive types and shadows, do you, my brethren, look upon it in this light? Are you convinced that the Old Testament contains the gospel, and the evidence for its doctrines? And have you read it carefully, in order to collect this evidence, and to establish yourselves in your most holy faith? Or, instead of making this use of the Old Testament, have you greatly neglected it, supposing it to contain a religion different from Christianity? This is the opinion of too many among us. But it is very unscriptural. The New Testament is so far from being contrary to, that it is in perfect harmony with the Old. They both preach one gospel, one Saviour, and one faith; for, both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Jesus Christ. And this life by him was preached by the ceremonies of the Old Testament, as well as by the

sacraments of the New, with only this difference—the New is the fulfilling of the Old; the Old Testament promises the Messiah should come and dwell among men, and the New proves that he did come, and that God has been manifest in the flesh. Consider what has been said at present in proof of this point. Weigh it carefully; and then I hope you will read the Old Testament with great pleasure and profit, finding it testifying throughout of Christ, and of salvation through him.

But what have we to do, may some say, with the Jewish types and ceremonies? Are they not all now repealed and abrogated? Yes. Christ has fulfilled them, even to the least jot and tittle; but they still stand upon the record, to teach us what he was to fulfil. They still continue to bear evidence for Christ, although the observance of them hath ceased; therefore we are still concerned to search what witness they bear of him. "Search the scriptures," says Christ; "for these are they which testify of me." There were no scriptures, when he spake this, but the Old Testament; and it testified of Christ. It did bear witness of him, by its types; for they were shadows of good things to come, of which Christ is the body; and by its prophecies; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. This testimony it still bears, witnessing to us what Christ was to be, and to do, and to suffer, as the New Testament witnesses to us that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah; for he was, and did, and suffered what the Old Testament had foretold. Thus they mutually support each other. The Old Testament looks forward to the accomplishment of its ceremonies and prophecies, referring its readers to some person who was to fulfil the law and the prophets, and the New Testament proves Jesus of Nazareth to be the person; and thus all the scriptures testify of him.

If you ask in what particular respect does the ceremonial law testify of him, it considers him chiefly in this point of view. The moral law being broken, and the transgressors of it being under guilt and liable to punishment, Christ was proposed to them by the types, as the sacrifice and atonement for their sins. All the sacrifices pointed at his sacrifice; and the atonement made by them had no merit but what was derived by faith from his all-perfect atonement: for he was the lamb fore-ordained to be slain by the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity, which was made before the foundation of the world; and he was the lamb typically slain from the foundation of the world in all the sacrifices after the fall, and slain really in the fulness of time, when he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. In this respect, all the sacrifices pointed to the Lamb of God, referring the transgressors of the moral law to his most precious blood, without the shedding of which there could be no remission: because it was not possible that the blood of beasts could take away sin.

Upon this state of the doctrine there arises an important question, in which, my brethren, you are all nearly concerned, namely, Whether you look upon Christ in the same light that the ceremonial law places him. All the ceremonies pointed to him; and when any one had offended against the moral law, the ceremonial law required him to bring his sacrifice to make an atonement for his sin: for without shedding of blood there was no remission; and thus he was taught to hope for remission only through the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God. Now, my brethren, Do you act as the ceremonial law enjoins? Are you convinced of your offences against the moral law, and sensible of your guilt, and apprehensive of your danger? Have you put your trust in the sacrifice of the immaculate Lamb of God? Have you placed all your hopes of pardon on the merits of his most precious blood? If not, what besides can you rely upon? You have sinned; and the wages of sin is death. The almighty lawgiver has declared, that you shall die—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Under this sentence you lie, as to anything you can do, either to respite it, or to revoke it, until it be executed upon you. Your life is forfeited, and you must die the death. And while justice spares you, how do you resolve to act? You hear there is a Saviour, and redemption in his blood. He laid down his life, and died to purchase life for all transgressors, who will come unto him for it: either, therefore, you must receive life of him, or die. Consider then, seriously, which of these two is your choice. Which would you have? life or death? If you refuse to come to Christ for life,

you must die. Your blood must be shed, and your soul must perish; for the Lord God, who cannot lie, hath spoken, that without shedding of blood there is no remission: unless, therefore, you are saved by the blood of Christ, there is no remission for you. You must die in your sins.

But if you seek to be saved by the blood of Christ, and desire the life purchased by his death, you have all possible encouragement to hope for his favour. He has begun, and he must carry on the work. Wait upon him, then, for his grace in the ways of his appointment, and you will find him still present in them. Seek his face in prayer. Hope to find his good Spirit in hearing and reading his word, and continue thus in his service, and he will give you to experience the truth of the doctrine preached by the ceremonial law. All its sacrifices taught remission of sin through blood; and all pointed to the bleeding Lamb of God, and to his atonement; and, by faith, believers of old received the benefit of his atonement, as we do at present; for by faith they kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born in Egypt should touch them. Wait upon God, and he will enable you also to act faith upon Christ your passover; and when his blood has been sprinkled upon your heart, the destroying angel cannot then touch you. This blood will keep you from death, and from him that hath the power of death. Through faith in it, you will live in the comfortable knowledge of what this scripture means: "He that believeth in me," says Christ, "though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die," John xi. 25, 26. Happy are they who thus believe and live in him. They have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; and they are passed from death unto life. They know the infinite value of his atonement, not only for the forgiveness of their past offences against the moral law, but also for their present failings. They want the benefit of his most precious blood every day: for all that these do wants to be cleansed in the fountain which was opened for sin and for uncleanness. They are forced to bring their very duties to be cleansed here, because these do not come up to the perfect demands of the moral law. There are short comings in their most holy things, for which they want an atonement. Oh how precious, then, must the blood of Christ be to such persons! With what love will their hearts burn towards him! With what gratitude will they serve him! How dear will the ordinances be to them, since there they find their Lord spiritually present, comforting, strengthening and establishing their hearts! These persons want no arguments to persuade them to a constant attendance upon the ordinances: for they know that they shall in them find him whom their soul longeth for, and shall in them enjoy a sweet communion with him, until the day of glory break, and the earthly shadows flee away. Then they shall see him face to face, and shall be for ever happy with their Lord. Oh that this happiness may be yours and mine! Grant it, Holy Father, for thy dear Son's sake; to whom, with the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory, praise and worship, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE IV.

UPON THE LAW OF FAITH.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.—Rom. iii. 27.

HAVING already considered the nature of the moral and of the ceremonial law, I am now to treat of the law of faith, mentioned in my text. The moral law is the holy, just, and good will of God, to which he required, and does require, perfect obedience: for his will is like himself, always one and the same, without variableness or shadow of turning: but there is no salvation now to be expected from this law, because all have sinned against it, and are liable to the threatened

penalties. Upon the first breach of it, God was graciously pleased to reveal the ceremonial law, the design and scope of which was to point out the promised Messiah, and to be the means of grace to the people of God: for by its services, which were shadows and types of Christ, and of the good things to come through him, the eye of faith was kept looking earnestly upon him, and waiting for the happy time when the day should break, and the shadows flee away, and he should come in the flesh, to deliver his people from the curses of the moral law. At the end of 4000 years he came, and having fulfilled the ceremonial law, and accomplished every thing signified by its typical services, it was then repealed, and the law of faith alone was established, by which believers have been saved from the beginning, and are to be saved to the end of the world.

If we take a short view of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter, we shall easily discover what this law of faith is. He is treating of the corruption of mankind, of the Jews as well as of the Gentiles, and he proves that they are all under sin: for they have all broken the moral law, and are guilty in the sight of God, and are thereby become absolutely incapable of ever attaining inherent legal righteousness. After the moral law has been once broken, it can never afterwards justify the sinner; because it requires perfect uninterrupted obedience, and allows of no failing, no, not in thought. Its style and language is—"Do this, and thou shalt live."—"If thou transgress, dying thou shalt surely die." And when any one transgresses, it knows nothing of mercy, nor has made any provision for pardon, but calls aloud for justice to inflict the deserved punishment. And since all men have transgressed, therefore the apostle concludes that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God. Thus every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested in the covenant of grace, in which the honour and dignity of the moral law is secured, and a wonderful way is revealed, whereby the sinner may be pardoned, and infinite justice may be glorified in showing him mercy. The Lord Christ, being God equal with the Father, freely covenanted to take man's nature, and in it to act and suffer as his representative, to pay the law perfect and infinitely meritorious obedience, and to endure satisfactory and infinitely meritorious sufferings, yea, to bear the wrath, and to die the death, which man deserved; and thus he wrought out an all-perfect righteousness, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe. And this method of justifying sinners by his being made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, is thus opened and explained by the apostle in the words going before the text. All have sinned, says he, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace; and if by grace, then it is not by works, but is all a free gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; his blood made the propitiation, and faith applies and receives it, and thereby declares the righteousness of God for the remission of sins that are past. And in this way of justifying sinners, through the righteousness of the Lord Christ, God the Father proves himself to be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus. He vindicates his justice, and the honour of his law; and, these being secured, he can then justify him that is ungodly, if he believe in Jesus: for then his faith will be imputed unto him for righteousness.

When the carnal man hears this doctrine, he is apt to take offence at it. He has such a high opinion of himself, and of his own boasted abilities, that he cannot conceive how God should justify sinners by his free grace, without any of their works and merit; and he is ready to ask, What! must I do nothing towards my justification? No. You can do nothing; because, while your sins are unpardoned, you are under sentence of death. You are dead in law, and you can no more do any act that is good and valid in the court of heaven, than a condemned criminal can do any act that is good and valid in one of our courts of justice. What! am I not to work out, says he, and to merit some part of my justification? No, none at all. The scripture gives all the glory to God, that it may cut off all boasting from man; for if God justify sinners freely by faith, without any works, where is boasting then? says the apostle. Man would have

room to boast, if he was justified wholly by his own works, or partly by faith, and partly by his works: if Abraham were justified by works he hath whereof to glory; but since he is justified entirely by free grace, through faith, in the righteousness of another, all boasting is excluded. By what law? By the law of works? No, by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, and therefore no flesh can boast: for how absurd would it be to boast of the works of that law which brings sinners in guilty, and condemns them? But all boasting is excluded by the law of faith; for faith receives justification freely from Jesus Christ, without any merit or works of man, and therefore is obliged to give all the glory to God; so that faith effectually excludes boasting; and the law of faith, the obligation that a sinner is under to go out of himself for righteousness, and to believe in the righteousness of another, in order to his being justified, still further excludes boasting; for the Lord God has made a decree, and heaven and earth shall pass away rather than it shall not be carried into execution, that a sinner shall be justified no other way but by faith. This is the law of the most high God, which he hath revealed from heaven, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent, for righteousness. Under this law we now live, and by it only can we be saved; and may he, who teacheth man wisdom, teach you the nature of it! May he accompany with his grace and blessing what I shall observe from the text,

First, Concerning the law of faith, and

Secondly, In defence of the apostle's doctrine, and

Thirdly, By way of application.

As to the first head, the apostle has thus explained the law of faith. The moral law is still in force; but there is no salvation by it, because it requires perfect uninterrupted obedience, and will not allow of the least failing, no, not in thought. If you offend once, you have lost all claim to legal righteousness for ever; so that by the works of the moral law no flesh can be justified, since all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. And as the moral law cannot save the sinner, neither can the ceremonial: for it is now repealed. Christ, the substance, is come, and has fulfilled all the legal types. These shadows of good things are now fled away; and to observe them at present would be denying that Christ has been manifested in the flesh, and has completed them. And therefore, since the moral law brings us all in guilty, and condemns us for transgressing it, and the observance of the ceremonial law is now repealed, there remains only the law of faith, by which a guilty sinner can be saved. This way of salvation by faith is established by law. The Lord God has made a decree, and has enacted, by his sovereign authority, that he who with his heart believeth unto righteousness shall be saved. This is the great charter of heaven, by which all the divine graces and blessings of time and of eternity are conveyed to transgressors. The law of faith says to them, you have broken the moral law, and are under sentence of condemnation; but behold the Lamb of God! believe in him, and you shall be justified. And thus the law of faith takes a poor sinner off from working and striving to merit his justification, and requires him only to believe what Christ has done and suffered for him, and in his stead. It commands him to rely entirely upon the righteousness of the Lord Christ for his pardon and acceptance with God the Father. This is the only way of justification now established by law. All other ways are illegal, and are expressly forbidden by a divine statute in this case made and provided, in which are these words: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," either moral or ceremonial. The moral law is broken, and it condemns him, and the ceremonial law is repealed; therefore we conclude that he cannot be justified but by the law of faith; and by this he is obliged and bound to accept justification by believing, and not by working; so that, if he seek to enter into life, he must keep this commandment; he must renounce all merit of his works, all righteousness of his own, and accept of the Saviour's righteousness as a free gift, and have it by faith, imputed to him for his justification. This is the law of faith upon which the scripture is very full. The apostle has discussed this point at large in his epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. In

the third chapter of the Romans, he proves both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin and guilt, and cannot by any of their own works be justified before God; and then he speaks of the manner of their justification, which is freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness. In the fourth chapter, he proceeds to illustrate this doctrine from the case of Abraham, who believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now, unto him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness; and since it is entirely of grace, then it is no more of works; for it is a manifest contradiction to maintain that we are justified freely by the grace of God; and yet that the work of man is some way needful to merit our justification. Is not this something like purchasing a free gift? Equally inconsistent is the grace of God bestowing freely, and the works of man meriting righteousness. Man has nothing to do but to believe; and this too is the gift of God's free grace; for righteousness is imputed to him who worketh not, but believeth, even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. In these scriptures, our justification before God is ascribed to faith without works. These two, faith and works, cannot stand together. The righteousness of Christ, freely received by faith, is inconsistent with man's working in hopes of attaining a righteousness of his own; for he hopes to attain an impossibility. The apostle, in his most excellent sermon, preached at Antioch, recorded Acts xiii. declares that we cannot be justified by the works of the law. After he had finished the argumentative part of his discourse, he makes this application: "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," neither by the works of the moral, nor yet of the ceremonial law; so that the whole of a sinner's justification is put upon his believing.—"All that believe are justified."

I might bring many more passages of scripture to confirm this doctrine, but they would be needless, because it is already abundantly confirmed by the articles and homilies of our church. The title of the eleventh article is,

"Of the justification of man.

"We are accounted righteous before God ONLY for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore, that we are justified by faith ONLY is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the homily of justification;"—

In which homily we have these words:

"This saying, that we be justified by faith ONLY, freely, and without works, is spoken for to take away clearly all merit of our own works, as being unable to deserve our justification at God's hand, and thereby most plainly to express the weakness of man, and the goodness of God, the great infirmity of ourselves, and the might and power of God, the imperfection of our own works, and the most abundant grace of our Saviour Christ; and therefore wholly to ascribe the merit and deserving of our justification unto Christ ONLY, and his most precious blood-shedding. This faith the holy scripture teacheth us is the strong rock and foundation of the Christian religion; this doctrine all old and ancient authors of Christ's church do approve; this doctrine advanceth and setteth forth the true glory of Christ, and beateth down the vain glory of man: this whosoever denieth is not to be accounted for a Christian man, nor for a setter forth of Christ's glory, but for an adversary to Christ and his gospel, and for a setter forth of man's vain-glory." These remarkable words are in the second part of the homily: in the third part we have this passage:

"The very true meaning of this proposition or saying, We be justified by faith in Christ ONLY, is this: we put our faith in Christ, that we be justified by him ONLY, that we be justified by God's free mercy, and the merits of our

Saviour Christ ONLY, and by no virtue or good works of our own, that is in us, or that we can be able to have, or to do, for to deserve the same; Christ himself ONLY being the cause meritorious thereof."

These authorities are very plain and very decisive. They declare that we are justified by faith ONLY, without any of our works or deservings. What words can be more full to the point than these are? "We put our faith in Christ, that we be justified by him only, and by no virtue or good works of our own that is in us, or that we can be able to have or to do for to deserve the same." And are these the words of our established church? Are they indeed part of one of our homilies? What! does she teach that no good works, which we can be able to do, deserve our justification? Surely then, my brethren, the law of faith is here with great plainness enforced, and you cannot, as good members of our church, refuse your assent to this proposition, that, in the way of justifying a sinner by faith in the righteousness of Christ, all boasting is excluded.

The natural man cannot receive this proposition, although it comes recommended to him by the highest authority. His heart rises against it. To leave him nothing to boast of, no work, no virtue to glory in, oh, it is too humbling to be borne! Scripture may be plain, and our church's comment upon it is still plainer, but he cannot allow himself to be quite helpless. It appears strange to him that he should have no hand or merit in justifying himself. His carnal reason cannot conceive how this should be, and therefore, whenever he hears of justification by faith only, he always fastens the idea of licentiousness to it, and is ready to object, "If this doctrine be allowed, what a wide door is here opened for all manner of wickedness? At this rate, men may do just what they please; for if they are to be justified by faith only, without works, is not the moral law hereby made void, and all obedience to it? Can there be any necessity for their obedience, unless they are to merit heaven by it?" The apostle was aware of this objection, and has answered it in this chapter: "Do we then make void the law through faith?" Do we repeal the moral law by showing that it cannot justify a sinner? Is this making it void? God forbid. "Yea, we establish the law." It stands established by faith, and by no other method, that has been revealed from heaven, or can be contrived on earth, as I proposed to show under my

Second general head, Wherein I was to prove the truth of the apostle's doctrine in my text. The doctrine is this: In the way of pardoning and justifying a sinner, God was willing to shut out all boasting, that the whole glory might be ascribed to his free grace, and therefore he chose the law of faith, which obliges the sinner to acknowledge himself justly condemned for breaking the moral law, and to rely upon the righteousness of the Lord Christ, as the only means of his pardon and acceptance; for if the sinner's justification had been altogether of works, or partly of faith and partly of works, then he would have had whereof to glory, because he would have done something whereby to merit it; but now that righteousness, which is the matter of his justification, being freely wrought out for him, and given to him by sovereign grace as a free gift, and then apprehended and received by faith only without works; in this case all boasting is utterly excluded. This is the apostle's doctrine, which I will endeavour to establish by the following arguments. And,

First, There has been no other way or method discovered of establishing the moral law after it had been broken, and of repairing its honour and dignity, but by the law of faith. The moral law is holy, just, and good. It is the will of the most high God, and therefore partakes of the divine holiness, justice, and goodness. It is as holy, just, and good as God is, and can no more behold the least iniquity than he can; so that when all flesh was become guilty before God, upon account of the breach of the moral law, there could be no longer any salvation expected from it; for the decree is positive and absolute—"By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

In what way then, or by what means, may they be justified whom the law condemns? As all have sinned, and robbed the law of its glory, it pleased God, of his infinite grace, to contrive a way whereby the sinner might be saved; and yet his law and justice might be maintained in their full honour and dignity.

The Son of God, equal with his Father in every perfection and attribute, undertook to stand in the place of sinners, and, as their representative, to do and suffer for them whatever law and justice demanded. The Father was well pleased for his righteousness' sake, because he knew that his beloved Son would magnify the law and bring honour to his justice. When the fulness of time was come, and the word was made flesh, for us and for our salvation he wrought out that righteousness, with which his Father was well pleased. His obedience to the moral law was for sinners, that, by the obedience of one, many might be made righteous; and he kept the law in all things, continually, perfectly, in thought, word, and deed, in its spiritual nature, and in its utmost extent.

This obedience was such, that he challenged the enemy to find the least failing in it, John xiv. 30: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Yea, he could appeal to the all-searching eye of infinite Justice for the absolute perfection of his obedience. Just before his sufferings began, he said, "Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," John xvii. 4. The work of his active obedience being finished, he then undertook to suffer for sinners the pains and penalties due to the breach of their moral law. He suffered once for sin, the just for the unjust; he took their griefs and carried their sorrows; he was wounded for their transgressions, and was bruised for their iniquities, the chastisement of their peace was upon him, and by his stripes they are healed. He bled, he was made a curse; he died, that, by his death, they might live. for, he who did and suffered these things was God. He was truly a divine and infinite person, self-existent, co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father; for, as our church well expresses it, "that which we believe of the glory of the Father the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality." And since there is no difference or inequality between the persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, consequently what the Lord Christ did and suffered was as infinitely meritorious as if the Father had done and suffered it. When the Lord our righteousness stood up to pay the law obedience, the dignity of his person brought more honour to the law than the obedience of all created beings, angels and men, could possibly have done; because their obedience would have been only finite, whereas his was divine and infinite, and they could only have wrought out a righteousness sufficient to save themselves; whereas he has brought in an everlasting righteousness to save even the ungodly. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of this subject, says, xlii. 21, "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, he will magnify the law and make it honourable;" and he did magnify it by completing it. He paid it both an active and a passive obedience in the most perfect degree, and established it in its highest honour and dignity; by which means even that justice, from which the sinner had most to fear, may now be glorified in justifying him; for God may now be just, and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

The righteousness, which is the ground and matter of our justification, is called in scripture, "the righteousness of faith," because faith receives and applies it, and "the law of faith," because the sinner is obliged to accept of this righteousness by faith only; and the manner of his receiving it is by imputation. As Christ took our sins upon him, and was a sinner by imputation, He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; so we are made the righteousness of God IN HIM; not righteous in ourselves inherently, but in him: we are righteous only in him: his righteousness is imputed to us, and made ours by faith, even as Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. And in this way of justifying a sinner by imputed righteousness the moral law is so far from being made void, that it is established, and the great end of it is answered: for the apostle says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The end of the law was to justify those who keep it: "Do this, and thou shalt live;" but we attain not to this end, because, through the corruption of our nature, we do not keep the law perfectly; but Christ fulfilled the law for all those who believe in him, and thereby he became the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. By believing,

we receive his righteousness, and then we answer the end of the law. Thus the law of faith does infinite honour to the moral law, and the believer is continually glorifying it; for his language is this—I acknowledge the law of God, to be perfectly holy, just, and good; it requires nothing but what is for the glory of the great Lawgiver, and for the good of his creatures; and no satisfaction can be made to its honour and dignity, after it has been once broken, but what is infinitely meritorious, which no sinner can possibly pay. But thanks be to God for the unspeakable gift of Christ's righteousness, which by faith is mine. His active and passive obedience are imputed unto me for righteousness; and I can now give glory to the moral law of God by acknowledging myself to be justly condemned by it, and by placing my whole trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto me righteousness.

Thus the moral law is established. It was fulfilled in Christ, and the end of it is answered in believers; from whence it appears, that the law of faith has provided a full security for the honour and dignity of the moral law, and has magnified it and made it honourable, not only in the way of justifying sinners, but also in their walk and conversation after they are justified; which is the second argument I shall bring in defence of the apostle's doctrine.

The law of faith absolutely excludes all boasting, and all confidence in our works, but it does not make void the moral law: for although Christ does deliver the sinner, through faith in his righteousness, from the guilt and condemnation of sin, and thereby justify him, yet he does not give him a discharge from all obedience to the moral law, but, by many gracious motives, inclines and enables him to keep it. He sends his good Spirit to enable the justified believer to exercise all his faculties in paying a grateful obedience to the will of his God.

His understanding was before in darkness. He knew not the will of God, and therefore formed a very wrong judgment of it; but now the Holy Spirit enlightens his understanding, and lets him see the goodness and equity of all God's commandments. He used to think some sins were very little, and might be easily pardoned, and in the commission of others he lived secure without any remorse of conscience, hoping to make amends by repentance and reformation, and some sorrow and tears. But now the case is altered. He sees the law in its spiritual nature and extent, in its holiness and justice, and confesses that the least breach of it deserves everlasting misery; and although Christ has delivered him from the curse of the law, yet with his understanding he assents to its being for God's glory, and for his own interest, to walk in the law of the Lord.

And as the Holy Spirit enlightens his understanding to see what the law of the Lord is, so he takes away the prejudices, and subdues the opposition, which were in his heart against it. The commandments cease to be grievous unto him. The love of God, being shed abroad in his heart, constrains him to love God, and to love the will of God; for God and his will are one. He that loves God cannot hate God's will. Love cannot beget hatred. And therefore when the Holy Spirit gives that faith which worketh by love, he then reconciles the believer's will to God's will, and he can truly say—Lord, what love have I unto thy law! I see the holiness, and goodness, and justice of it; my will approves of it, and my affections love it; yea, I love it above gold and precious stones. Oh! give me strength that I may keep it with my whole heart. And the Holy Spirit does wonderfully strengthen believers in keeping it. He makes them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: for he sets their hearts at liberty, and then they run in the way of the commandments. So far then is faith from making void the moral law, that it establishes it as a rule of life for the believer who endeavours, by his holy walking, to glorify it. As he has received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so he desires to walk in him unto all pleasing: And this he would do, not to procure himself a right and title to heaven; for he received that when the Redeemer's righteousness was imputed to him for his justification; and gratitude for this inestimable gift constrains him to love God who so exceedingly loved him, and to evidence this love in the way which God has required; and that is in a grateful obedience. This love, which casteth out all other fear, brings in a filial fear of displeasing his loving Father. He dreads nothing so much as sin, because he knows nothing else can offend his Lord and

his God; and therefore he would resist unto blood striving against sin. He would rather die than sin. This fear of offending God influences his whole life and conversation, and keeps him continually watchful, that he may walk worthy of God, who hath called him unto his kingdom and glory.

Upon these two arguments we may rest the truth of the apostle's doctrine in my text. The law of faith excludes boasting, because it excludes all man's works and merit in his justification. His keeping of the moral law cannot in the least justify him before God, because, after he has once broken it, it becomes to him the ministration of death and condemnation. In this state Christ finds the sinner, guilty and condemned, under the curses of the broken law, miserable and helpless. He takes pity on his distress, and determines to save him. With a love truly divine and infinite, he comes from his eternal throne, appears in the likeness of sinful flesh, and God and man are united in one Christ. This was necessary in order to his working out in our nature a divine and infinite righteousness for believers, against which law and justice might have no exception. He attained this righteousness by obeying the law, by suffering its pains and penalties, even unto death, and by being put into the prison of the grave. He was kept there three days, but it was not possible he should be holden any longer. On the third day he rose triumphant from the dead, and thereby demonstrated that law and justice had no further demands upon him: for they had certainly received full satisfaction when they released him out of prison. The law was magnified infinitely by his obedience and sufferings, and it is made honourable, whenever a sinner is brought to submit to be justified through the righteousness of Christ; because he then acknowledges the law to be holy, just, and good, allows himself to be justly condemned by it, and is convinced that no righteousness can save him, but what is infinitely perfect. Such is the Redeemer's. The benefit of this he seeks, and when he receives it, and it is imputed unto him by faith, he then stands justified in the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, and has the Spirit of Christ to guide, strengthen, and sanctify him. This good Spirit enlightens him to understand the law, to love it, and gives strength to keep it: and thus by his holy walking the law gets honour: so that the law of faith does not make void the moral law, but establishes it, both in the justification of a sinner, and also in the holy walk and conversation of a believer.

It is evident, then, that ever since the moral law was broken, there has been but one way in which a sinner could be saved; and this was the law of faith, which stands established by the sovereign decree of the most high God. He has solemnly provided and enacted, that whoever would enter into life must believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Have you then, my brethren, kept this commandment, and believed in him? Apply this to your own hearts, and examine them strictly. Do you believe the record which God hath given of his Son? If not, how do you expect to be saved? Against God's will you cannot be saved. You cannot resist omnipotence. And his will is, that you submit to the law of faith, and with the heart believe unto righteousness. The moral law condemns you to death for sinning against it, and no tears or sorrow, no repentance or amendment, can repair the injury you have done it; and therefore by it you cannot be saved. There remains, then, only the law of faith. This offers you a free pardon, and obliges you to accept of it upon pain of dying in your sins. The offer is, "He that believeth shall be saved," but, oh! how dreadful is the sentence which follows the kind offer, "He that believeth not shall be damned!"

Perhaps some of you may be convinced of the necessity of believing; but you cannot see how faith in the righteousness of another can gain acceptance with God. You think that your works and Christ's must go together to your justification. This is the opinion of too many among us, who will not submit to the righteousness of Christ, but will go about to establish their own righteousness along with his. Their mistake arises from their ignorance of the moral law; they know not its infinite holiness, and what its demands are; and from their ignorance of the gospel, which by the law of faith obliges the sinner to accept of that righteousness as a free gift, which is to satisfy all the demands of the moral law.

Such a righteousness Christ has wrought out, and he offers it freely, and the sinner by accepting it receives justification to life. He is made alive to God, and then can act and work in spiritual duties; but before this, he was dead legally and spiritually, dead under the sentence of the law, and dead to all motions and acts of spiritual life. While he lies in this state, he can do no more than a dead corpse can; but by the gift of righteousness he is legally alive. The sentence of death is taken away, and he is freely pardoned; and then he becomes spiritually alive, and can perform the offices of spiritual life. Being made alive at the root, he produces the fair blossoms and brings forth the ripe fruits of righteousness. But these fruits do not make him legally alive; they only evidence him to be so. They are the proper effects and consequences of his being spiritually alive, as the bringing forth the blossoms and fruit prove the tree to have life, but do not give it life. Oh! beware then, my brethren, of the dangerous mistake of making up a righteousness which is to be your justification to life, partly with your own works, and partly with Christ's. These two cannot stand together in your justification. The prophet separates them entirely: "I will make mention," says he, "of thy righteousness, even thine only," Psalm lxxi. 16; and yet he had as much righteousness to make mention of as any of the Old Testament saints. And the apostle, whose praise is in the gospel for his labouring more abundantly than all the apostles, yet prayed to be "found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9.

What! shall we not do good works, will some say? Yes. Work from life, but not for life. You cannot work any thing acceptably until you who were dead in trespasses and sins be quickened; and when you are made alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, then you will study to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good word and work.

This careful walking, my Christian brethren, is in a more especial manner incumbent on you. You are called unto liberty; only use not your liberty for an occasion of sin: for you are still under the law to Christ. Although you are freed from its condemning power, yet it is still a rule for your life and conduct; because it is the holy, just, and good will of God your reconciled Father, whom you love, and whom you are exceedingly desirous of pleasing. And it is the will of Christ, your Saviour, to whose image you seek to be conformed, and in whose steps you would gladly tread. And it is the will of the Holy Spirit, who is your guide, your sanctifier, and your strengthener: by him being led, you can take up your cross daily, mortifying sin, resisting the world's allurements, overcoming the temptations of Satan, and subduing the risings of your carnal minds against the moral law. Under the teachings of this good Spirit you will be led right, and under his influence you will be enabled to bring forth much fruit. Oh that the Spirit of the Lord may rest upon you, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, that you may always walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. May he help you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things, and so to walk before him as to demonstrate publicly that you do not make void the law by faith, but do perfectly establish it in its full force and vigour. Grant this, holy Father, for Jesus Christ his sake! to whom with thee, and the eternal Spirit, be equal honour, praise, and worship, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE V.

UPON IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—2 Cor. v. 21.

It is the great and merciful design of the gospel to acquaint a sinner, who is guilty and condemned by the holy law of God, how he may be pardoned and justified. Every one of us is a sinner; for all have sinned, and therefore all of us stand in need of pardon, and ought to receive it with thankful hearts as soon as the gospel preaches it to us. But the greatest part of mankind are not sensible of their guilt, nor apprehensive of their danger. Sin has nothing in it terrible to them. They love it, dream of happiness in the enjoyment of it, and while this delusion continues, they see not their want of, and therefore have no desire for, the gospel salvation. But when one of these persons awakes and opens his eyes, he is then terrified at the sight of his present state. Sin appears to him in a new light: he finds it to be exceeding sinful, and the wrath of God, revealed from heaven against it, to be beyond measure dreadful. His guilty conscience alarms him with an awful sense of his danger, and makes him feel some of the punishment due to sin; and then he cannot be easy until he know that his sins may be pardoned, and he cannot be happy until he has some evidence of their being pardoned. Now, Christianity is the only religion which can give such a person relief; because it alone teaches him by what means he may be pardoned and justified, and have peace with God. He may be pardoned freely through the grace of God, and justified through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, whom God the Father hath made sin for us, although he knew no sin in himself, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, and, being thus justified by faith in him, we might have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Although this doctrine be clearly taught throughout the scriptures, yet there are at present two sorts of men who are great enemies to it, and who strive to keep convinced sinners from the comfort of it: I mean the Papists, who go about to establish their own righteousness, and the Pharisees, among us, who will not submit to the righteousness of God. The notion of the Papists concerning merit is the foundation of all their errors. They teach, that Christ merited the grace for them, which is in them, and then this grace in them merits their justification; and for this inherent grace God doth justify them. And thus they make a Saviour of inherent grace, and put it in the place of Christ, and give his glory to their own works. But if inherent grace be our righteousness before God, then how does God justify the ungodly, who have no grace, or how can he justify a man for those graces which are imperfect, and which want the benefit of Christ's atonement? Absurd as this opinion of theirs is, yet they must defend it. Their cause rests upon it: for if you take away their doctrine of merit, down falls the whole superstructure of their superstition, all their indulgences, pardons, pilgrimages, masses, fasts, penances, and the mighty Babel of man's inventions. When this doctrine was grown to a monstrous height, it pleased God to raise up Luther and the rest of the reformers to preach against it. Their principal aim and design was to overthrow the merit of works, and to establish justification by faith only, and they succeeded. Several nations were converted from the errors of Popery, and among the rest the inhabitants of this island. Our forefathers threw off the Romish yoke, and received the pure doctrines of the gospel, which, amidst our several changes and revolutions of government, have been happily preserved, until there has been, of late years, a manifest departure from them. Great multitudes of Protestants are going fast back again to Popery, and seemingly without knowing it; for it is a received opinion in England, as much as in France, that man's works are effectual and meritorious towards his justification before God. This is the fundamental heresy of the Papists, and how many nominal Protestants have fallen into it, our enemies can tell. They see, with plea-

sure, that there is very little appearance of religion left amongst us, and that some of our most decent professors are become Papists in that leading principle which separates the Popish from the Protestant communion.

Things being in this unpromising state, the friends of the reformation should bestir themselves. They should try to point out the old land-marks. This is more especially incumbent upon the clergy. It is high time for them to hold forth to their people the fundamental doctrines of the established church, and to warn them against the errors of Popery and Pharisaism. With this view I have chosen the words now read for your present meditation; and may the Lord give his blessing to what shall be spoken upon them! Oh that he may accompany with the effectual working of his power, what shall be said,

First, Concerning Christ's unspotted innocence. He knew no sin. Yet,

Secondly, God made him to be sin for us, and,

Thirdly, For this reason, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

And first, our Lord's fitness to be made sin for us, is here set forth by his knowing no sin. He knew it not in the scripture sense of the word. He had no practical knowledge of sin, either in thought, word, or deed. Speculatively, he knew it well; but that could not defile him: for it was the sin of others which he knew, and hated, and came to put away by the sacrifice of himself. Christ was perfectly acquainted with the holy, just, and good law of God; he saw clearly into the purity and spirituality of it, which could not suffer the least offence, being as holy, just, and good as God himself is, and being the copy of his most perfect mind and will. In this view our Lord beheld the odious nature of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it. He knew the hatred which the all-pure God had to it, the punishment it deserved, and the everlasting fire which it had kindled in the nethermost hell. No one ever understood these things so clearly as Christ did. He saw the destructive effects of sin, what disorder it had brought into the world, and to what temporal and eternal evils it had subjected the bodies and the souls of men. He knew also that there was no help upon earth, and that no creature in heaven, of the highest order of angels, could deliver any one sinner from his distress, and much less a multitude; therefore his eye pitied us, and his compassion was moved at the sight of our lost and helpless state. Behold what manner of love he hath bestowed upon such sinners as you and me! a love which led him to do greater wonders to save, than he had before done to create us; for he, the most high God, blessed for ever, humbled himself to be made man. He, whom angels and archangels had been worshipping from the moment of their creation, took upon him the form of a servant, and came to save his people from their sins. Adore, my brethren, and praise this infinite condescension of the incarnate God: for it was for you, who believe it by true faith, and for your salvation, that the word was made flesh. He was equal to this great work; because he was perfect God and perfect man in one Christ, and as such he was absolutely free from sin—"he knew no sin," he knew it not in practice. No sin, no inclination, no motion or rising of sin ever entered into his heart, and therefore he was pure from the least spot or stain of pollution.

The scripture is very plain upon this point. Christ was known in the times of the Old Testament by the titles of the Holy Name, the Holy One, the Holy One of Israel; and the prophet Isaiah speaks of the Lord the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One; and when the fulness of time was come, that this Holy One should be made flesh, he was conceived and born without the least taint of corruption, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a pure virgin. Yea, the angel Gabriel pronounced him to be holy before his birth, in the message to the virgin, Luke i. 35: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." He was born holy; and such was the life of the holy child Jesus, as his birth had been. We may see clearly how pure he came into this world, from the purity with which he lived in it. How different was his life from ours! he knew no sin, in thought, word, or deed. The prophet says, "He had a clean heart," all his thoughts were clean; "He had pure hands," all his affections were pure; "and he had a mouth without guile,"

no idle, false, or sinful word ever passed through his lips. He was altogether holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners. In the law of the Lord was his study and his delight. He came to glorify it, and by keeping it in its spiritual nature, and in its full extent, with every faculty of soul and body, and at all times, he made it honourable. He paid it that obedience which it demanded, and continued in all things that were written in the book of the law to do them. Thus in him was no sin; sin being the transgression of the law. And accordingly we find him challenging his bitterest enemies upon this point; "Which of you," says he, (John viii. 46,) "convinces me of sin?" Nay, he went further and defied Satan himself, as well as the Jews: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me," no sin of mine own to lay to my charge.

From these passages it plainly appears that Christ knew no sin. He was a pure and spotless lamb, holy and without blemish; and it was necessary he should be so; because, if he ever had any sin of his own, he could not have obeyed and suffered for the sins of others. The infinite purity of God's law can pass by no sin. Upon the least transgression, if it be but a thought or motion in the heart, the law passes sentence and condemns: "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them:" and if you continue not to do them, justice calls aloud for the infliction of the threatened curse, and waits to see it fully executed; therefore, unless Christ had continued to do all things which are written in the book of the law, he could not have obeyed and suffered for the sins of others; because he would then have suffered for his own, which must not be imagined. It would be blasphemy to suppose any such thing. When the last scene of his sufferings began, he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, a lamb without blemish and without spot, such as the ceremonial law required. You know, my brethren, that no creature could be offered in sacrifice to the Lord, if it had the least blemish or deformity. By this type was prefigured the perfect sinless purity, which was to be in the great sacrifice for sin. He was to be a lamb without blemish, without the least spot or stain of sin, either in his nature or in his life, and such a one was the Lamb of God. The apostle says expressly, 1 Pet. ii. 22, "He did NO sin." And St. John, 1 Eph. iii. 5, speaks to believers, "Ye know, that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin:" this was a known and established truth, that in Christ there was NO sin. If judgment was laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, there would be found in him a perfect conformity to the law. And this his active obedience was necessary to prepare him for his passive, that, having obeyed the law actively, he might suffer passively whatever was due to our disobedience. And that righteousness, by which we are accounted righteous before God, is the effect of his being obedient unto death, of his obedience to the preceptive part of the law, which was his fulfilling the righteousness of the law; and of his obedience to the vindictive part of the law, which was his bearing the curse of it. His active obedience was absolutely perfect. He knew NO sin, and therefore was every way fit and qualified to suffer for sin, "to be made sin for us," as the apostle expresses it in my text; which words I am, in the second place, to consider.

Although Christ knew no sin, yet he was made sin. How could that be? How could he be made sin, who knew no sin? He was made sin, not practically, but by imputation. He had no sin inherently in him, but had sin imputed to him, when the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all. In his own person there was no inherent spot or stain of sin, or any such thing. He could not touch the pollution of sin, nor could he practically know its filthy defiling nature. He was not a drunkard, a whoremonger, a thief, or whatever you call a sinner, as such. He neither was a sinner practically, nor had he ever the least inclination to be so; because his will was always in perfect harmony with the will of God. From whence it appears that Christ was not made a polluted sinner, nor yet a guilty sinner, as to the merit and desert of sin. In this respect he was not capable of being made sin. He did not, as to himself, deserve the punishment of sin, for which he suffered. Punishment is due to transgressors, but Christ had not transgressed. Even when he suffered,

according to St. Peter, he was just and righteous in himself, (1 Pet. iii. 18,) "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." He was perfectly just, and therefore capable of undertaking to suffer for the unjust, that, as no suffering was due to him, the merit of what he suffered might be imputed unto them. And so it was. He freely entered into an obligation to stand in the place of the unjust, and to undergo the punishment due to them; and this, with his own consent, the Lord laid upon him; and in this sense he was made sin for us. He was made sin in the same way that we are made righteous. Now, the righteousness by which we are justified is not inherent in ourselves, but it is in Christ, and is made ours through God's imputing it to us. In like manner our sins were not inherent in Christ, but imputed to him and laid upon him. He was willing to become our surety, and to answer for our sins, and to have them imputed to him, so as to be obliged to bear the punishment of them, even the wrath and curse, which, if he had not endured them, would have sunk every one of us into the pit of hell. But Christ his own self bore them in his own body upon the tree. As the surety of all that shall believe in him, he undertook to answer all the demands which law and justice had upon them. And he was willing to have all their sins imputed to him, and placed to his account, that he might satisfy for them. Accordingly we read that he was once offered to bear the sins of many, and that by his own blood he obtained eternal redemption for them. When their iniquities were laid upon him, although he knew no sin, yet he knew what it was to suffer for sin. He died the death and endured the pains, which were in nature and proportion due to them for their sins, and for the full satisfaction of law and justice.

In this sense Christ was made sin; but what would this avail, if he was a mere man? He might be made sin, and might suffer, but not for us. The apostle says, in my text, he was made sin for us. What was effectual to us, must be more than human, and could be nothing short of divine. Christ's undertakings were too great to be performed by any person less than the most high God And accordingly the scripture teaches us that Christ was Jehovah, the true self-existent God, a co-equal and co-eternal person with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and in his person God and man were united in one Christ. By this personal union, what the manhood did and suffered partook of the infinite merit of the Godhead. The manhood of Christ had no sin in it; and therefore what it suffered for the sin imputed to it was infinitely meritorious, because he who suffered was God as well as man. This most wonderful method of bringing many sons unto glory was contrived by the ever-blessed Trinity, and settled by the covenant of grace. God the Son was pleased to become their surety, and to stand up in their nature to act and to suffer for them; and what he undertook he could not fail of accomplishing; for all things are alike possible to his almighty power. When he acted for his people, he was God as well as man; his obedience was therefore divine and infinite, and by the merits of it shall many be made righteous. When he suffered for his people, his sufferings were of such infinite merit and efficacy, that by his stripes they are healed and freed from suffering. He took their griefs and carried their sorrows, that they might never feel them. When he died, and paid the debt to justice, which they ought to have paid, he soon brought them a discharge; for although he was buried and descended into hell, yet on the third day he rose again from the dead, and thereby demonstrated that all the ends were answered for which he was made sin for them.

Here, my Christian brethren, let us stop and adore the free love and rich mercy of our Divine Redeemer. He, the most high God, blessed for ever, condescended to be made man for us, and for our salvation. Oh wonderful condescension! that there should be any mercy for such enemies and rebels as we have been; and how did he magnify his compassion, that, when he might in justice have destroyed us, yet he humbled himself and stooped down to save us! But how great was his humiliation in vouchsafing to take on him the form of a servant, and to live in poverty and contempt! Considering who it was that became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, we see the greatest wonder of all—the depth of his humiliation. He that was the lowest upon

earth, was the highest in heaven. He came down to be made sin for us, to have our sins imputed to him, and to answer for them to law and justice. Accordingly, they were laid upon him, and he bore them in his own body on the cross, and thereby saved us from our sins. Blessed, for ever blessed, be the name of our dear Redeemer. Glory, and honour, and thanks never ceasing be to him, who took all our sufferings upon himself, because he could bear that which we could not, and because he could satisfy for that, in a short time, which we could not in eternity; and who, having thus delivered us from sin and suffering, has righteousness to impute unto us, in which we may stand blameless at the bar of justice. Oh, let us praise him with our lips and lives who was made sin for us, that he might be made righteous to us!—which is the third point I was to consider.

He was a spotless lamb, and therefore capable of being made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Righteousness is a perfect conformity to the law and will of God; and without this, no man shall see the Lord: "For the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9: and we are all unrighteous, because we have all sinned, and robbed God of his glory. The question then is, In what way, or by what means, can we attain righteousness? Can we attain it by the works of the law? No, it is impossible; because, if it were attainable by our own works, then we should be inherently righteous, and should have such a righteousness as the law demands; but the law demands perfect, unsinning obedience, which we have not paid it: and upon our failing to pay it, the law pronounces us guilty, passes sentence, and leaves us, as to any thing we can do, for ever under the curse; it being the irreversible decree of the almighty lawgiver, that, since all flesh has sinned and broken the law, therefore by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

But if sinners cannot be justified by any inherent righteousness, what righteousness have they to plead at the bar of justice? They have a righteousness absolutely perfect and complete, called, in scripture, the righteousness of God, because the Lord our righteousness contrived and wrought it out. He came into the world, and took flesh, in order to fulfil all righteousness. By his obedience and sufferings he satisfied all the demands of law and justice, and paid that immense debt which none of us could pay, and hereby he was made of God unto us righteousness: God the Father constituted and ordained him to be the perfect righteousness of believers. In him is their righteousness: "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord," Isa. liv. 17. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

If you ask, how the righteousness of another can be made yours? It must be in the same way that Christ was made sin. He had no sin of his own, and yet he was made sin by imputation; and believers have no righteousness of their own, and yet are made righteous by imputation. Christ had no inherent sin of his own, nor have they any inherent righteousness; but he was made sin by having their sins imputed to him, and they are made righteous by having his righteousness imputed to them. The manner of God's proceeding is the same in both cases. When the Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," how is this to be understood? Has he no iniquity in him? Yes, he has original and inherent sin; and if he says he has no sin, he deceives himself; but he is a blessed man, because the Lord does not impute sin to him, nor charge him with it. So when David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness; has the man this righteousness in himself, and is he inherently righteous? No; but, by an act of grace, God accounts him righteous, and imputes righteousness unto him; and therefore he is blessed. And thus God imputes righteousness to them who believe, not for a righteousness which is in them, but for a righteousness which he imputes unto them. As their iniquities were laid upon Christ, and satisfaction for them required of him, as a debt is of the bondsman, although he had none of the money; so is the righteousness of Christ laid upon them. In like manner, as their sins were made his, so is his righteousness made theirs. He is sin for them, not inherently, but by imputation; and they righteousness through him, not inherently, but by imputation

This is the righteousness in which alone a sinner can stand acquitted at God's bar. There he must make mention of this righteousness, even of this only; for none but this can answer the demands of the law, and expiate the curse of it; and this righteousness can be made his by no other way than by God's imputing it to him; which, as it is the great truth held forth in my text, I will endeavour more fully to explain and defend by the following reasons:—

And first, the ceremonial law taught this doctrine very clearly. Whenever a person had sinned, he was to bring his sacrifice to the priest, and to lay his hands upon its head, confessing his sins over it, and then the guilt was transferred to the sacrifice, and its blood was shed instead of his. This is mentioned several times in Leviticus iv.

And of the scape-goat we read, Lev. xvi. 21. "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." All the sins of the children of Israel were passed over to the goat; but were they put into the goat, or were they inherent in him? No. This is too absurd to be supposed; but they were put upon the goat. And this was a very expressive image of our sins being laid upon Christ; for all the sacrifices represented him. As the scape-goat had imputed to him all the people's iniquities, so had Christ all his people's iniquities imputed to him; and as the goat did bear upon him all their iniquities, so Christ did bear all their sins in his own body upon the tree. What was prefigured by the type, was fulfilled by the reality, when Christ suffered once for sin, the just for the unjust: for then he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Our righteousness is in him. This is a

Second argument: That righteousness, which is our justification before God, is IN Christ: believers have it not in themselves; they have not an inherent righteousness, wrought out and attained by their own works, but their justifying righteousness was wrought out by another, and it is in him. How, then, can it be made theirs in any other way than by imputation? Must it not be transferred to them in the same way that their sins were transferred to him? And how were they transferred to him? They were imputed, not inherent: they were laid upon him, not into him. So his righteousness is in him, as their sins were in them; and it is imputed, not inherent; it is not put into them, but upon them. Their righteousness is in him, and he is the Lord their righteousness, and consequently that righteousness for which they are justified cannot be in them; but it is made theirs when God imputes it to them, and they by faith receive it. The manner of receiving it, which is by faith, is the

Third argument I shall bring in support of the apostle's doctrine. Faith is the only instrument which God is pleased to use in applying Christ's righteousness. The apostle calls it the righteousness of faith, because faith alone is employed in the application of this righteousness. It is never called the righteousness of any other grace, but of faith. We never read of the righteousness of humility, meekness, or charity: these are of great price in the sight of God, but they have no office in justifying a sinner. This belongs solely to faith: for to him that worketh not, but believeth, is righteousness imputed. It is not by working, but by believing, that sinners are justified. When they are convinced of sin, find no righteousness in themselves, hear the dreadful sentence of the law against the unrighteous, and feel in their guilty consciences some of the miseries which they deserve, then they are stirred up to seek for a righteousness in which they may stand acquitted before the judgment-seat of God. The scripture offers to them such a righteousness in Christ; and when God enables them to rest and to rely upon it for their justification, they then by faith have peace with God, through Jesus Christ their Lord. Thus the convinced sinner is forced to seek a righteousness out of himself, and to rely upon the righteousness of another: and how can this be made or accounted his in any other way than by imputation? How can he be made righteous in Christ, but by having Christ's righteousness imputed to him?

If these arguments be well considered, they will, I hope, establish the doctrine of the text: for they clearly prove, that God hath appointed the Lord Jesus

Christ to be the only righteousness of his people. He was made sin for them; their sins being laid upon him, as the sins of the children of Israel were laid upon the scape-goat. And he was made of God unto them righteousness, and their righteousness is in him, not an inherent, but an imputed righteousness, and received by faith, which submits to be justified by the righteousness of another, and rests with full trust and confidence upon it. This is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity; and the direct contrary is the fundamental doctrine of Popery.

At the reformation, the Lord raised up faithful witnesses to bear their testimony against that reigning heresy of the Papists which places merit in man's works; yea, such merit as to justify a sinner before God; yea, still greater merit; for they maintain that a man can do more than the moral law requires, and can perform works of supererogation, the merit of which may be imputed to another person; and yet, at the same time, they deny the imputation of Christ's merits. The first reformers preached boldly against those blasphemies; and that blessed servant of God, Luther, was bold indeed. He knew well the dangerous tendency of the doctrine of merit, and therefore he principally wrote and preached against it; and God gave him great success. A sinner made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, is, as he used to say, the doctrine upon which a church stands or falls. Upon it our church was established, and has long stood; but do we stand upon it now? Are we all champions for the Protestant doctrine, or are we in general departed from it? Alas! our enemies can tell, with triumph they tell, of the increase of the Popish interest among us. And why does it increase? Whence is it that they make so many converts? Is it not because our people are not well established in this Protestant doctrine? If it was taught and preached more, our churches would not be so empty as they are, nor the mass-houses so full. Many of our people know not what it is to be a Protestant, and therefore they become an easy prey to the Papists, who are so busy and successful in making converts, that they pretend they have on one Lord's day more communicants at the mass-house in Lincoln's Inn Fields than we have on the same day at all the churches in London. I fear this may be true; but is it not greatly alarming? and ought it not to stir up the Protestant clergy to try to put a stop to the spreading of Popery? But how can they do this more effectually than by laying the axe to the root, and striking at the doctrine of merit, which is the fundamental error of the Papists? Overthrow this, and Popery cannot stand. A man cannot be a Papist, who believes that his justifying righteousness is in Christ; and whoever does not believe this, is not a Protestant. May the Lord raise us up faithful and able men (for we greatly want them) to defend his righteousness against them who have established a meritorious righteousness of their own, and will not submit to the righteousness of God!

But, besides the Papists, we have other enemies to the doctrine in the text. The careless sinner treats it with great contempt; for he does not see its value, nor his own want of it, and therefore he lives easy and secure in the practice of sin. The scripture has revealed the wrath of heaven against all his unrighteousness, but he does not regard the revelation. The law brings him in guilty, and condemns him, but he gives himself no concern about the threatenings of the law. The gospel offers him mercy, and its ministers entreat him to accept of it; but he stops his ears. Neither the grace of the gospel, nor the terrors of the law, can prevail upon him. Although he has no righteousness of any kind, yet he lives as if he were in no danger. Oh deluded man! if thou didst but know thy state, thou wouldst cry earnestly to the Redeemer, and seek to be accepted in his righteousness. May he take pity upon thee, and send his good Spirit to convince thee of sin, and to convince thee of righteousness!

The formalist is another enemy to the doctrine in the text. He will not receive justification by imputed righteousness, but will have his own righteousness seated on the throne along with Christ. He falls into this great mistake from his ignorance of the perfect nature of God's law, which has made no provision for any failing, but for the very first passes sentence, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in ALL things," &c.; and since all have failed, consequently all are under the curse, and can never be justified by that law which has condemned

them. And his mistake arises also from his ignorance of the gospel. He takes the gospel to be a proposal of terms and conditions, mitigating the rigour of the law; and so he makes Christ only a milder lawgiver than Moses, requiring not perfect but sincere obedience of his creatures: whereas Christ came to redeem us from the curse of the law, by obeying its precepts, and by suffering its penalties; and our righteousness comes to us from him as the fulfiller of the law, and is received by faith without any of our works or deservings.

If any of you, my brethren, have fallen into this mistake, weigh and consider attentively what has been before said upon the moral law, and upon the law of faith; and if you are not convinced, can you ask God to direct you in the right way? If you can, he has promised to give you wisdom; he will teach you the true doctrine, and will enable you to submit to the righteousness of God. But if you are convinced, are you waiting for the precious gift of faith, or have you received it? If you are waiting for it, remember whose gift it is. The Holy Spirit alone can work faith in your heart. It requires his power, even that almighty power, which raised up Jesus from the dead. The scripture ascribes to him the office of convincing sinners of Christ's righteousness, and of giving them faith to rest upon it for their justification. Look up to him for this blessing. Wait in his appointed ways, hoping for it. And when the Spirit shall be poured upon you from on high, then you will be justified by faith in Christ's righteousness, and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever.

Happy are you, my Christian brethren, who have received the righteousness of faith, and knowing whom you have believed. Since Christ's righteousness is yours, bring forth its proper fruits, and show publicly that there is an inseparable connection between justifying faith and sanctifying grace. By justifying faith the believer is united to Christ, and receives life from him, as a graft does from the stock upon which it grows. By virtue of this union, Christ liveth in the believer, and enables him to put forth the proper acts of spiritual life, as the stock upon which the graft grows supplies it with sap and juices to put forth leaves, and blossom, and fruit. This is the certain effect of the abiding of a branch in the vine: it will bring forth fruit; and if any one fancy himself to be a believer, and neither brings forth, nor is seeking to bring forth, any fruit, he only deceives himself, and the truth is not in him; for whosoever has Christ for a Saviour, will have the Holy Spirit for a sanctifier, and will bring forth fruit to the glory of God.

See, then, my Christian brethren, that ye value and prize this righteousness, and give it its proper honour, both with your hearts and lives. While you are bringing forth its peaceable fruits, you will continually find the comforts of it. This righteousness is one of the pieces of Christian armour. It is called a breastplate; because it is the proper armour for the vital parts. Your life is always safe while you have your breastplate on; you need not fear the terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth by day. Let thousands fall, you are safe. You are defended from outward attacks: for although many be the afflictions of the righteous, yet the Lord delivereth him out of them all; and you are kept in inward peace: for the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. In time of sickness this righteousness will be a perpetual cordial. It will not suffer the heart to sink, although the body grows weak and faint; for this breastplate is not only proof against the pains of sickness, but also against the weapons of death. "Righteousness delivereth from death," Prov. xi. 4; not by keeping the justified person from dying, but by keeping him from the fear of the first, and from the power of the second death. The righteous man, armed with this invulnerable breastplate, can challenge all his enemies. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or death? Nay; clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness, I shall not be afraid to go through the valley and shadow of death, nor yet to stand at the awful bar of God's infinite justice. Why should he fear to stand there to be tried? for who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God himself that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again for their justification; and in his righteous-

ness they shall stand holy and unblamable and unreprovable before the judgment-seat of God.

Since these are some of the benefits of having on the breastplate of righteousness, let us, my Christian brethren, keep it always in use. Since we are fighting under the Captain of our salvation, let us be ever armed with his righteousness; and may we all wear it upon our breasts, that neither guilt within, nor troubles without, may ever separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord; but may we, in life and death, find the blessedness of this armour, by its protecting us from the threatenings of the broken law, and from the vengeance of almighty justice; and may we, in time and in eternity, live to his glory, who humbled himself to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Grant this, holy Father, for the sake of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ! to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, be honour and glory, and blessing and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE VI.

UPON BEING RIGHTEOUS OVER-MUCH.

Be not righteous over-much.—Eccles vii. 16.

THE generality of men think it a very easy matter to get into heaven. They have never tried in earnest to get in, and therefore they are not sensible of any difficulty. Scripture may speak contrary to their opinion, but they will not hear it. Plain matter of fact may be against them, but they will not regard it. They sit down easy and unconcerned about their eternal state, resolved to enjoy the present world, like the fool upon record, "Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry;" live jovially at present. Give thyself no trouble about religion; and let not one thought of death disturb thee. It will be time enough to prepare for eternity at some future period. Thus they think and act. Nay, many have arrived at such an absolute indolence, that they are angry and provoked if any one tells them they are certainly in the wrong; and they will not bear it; no, not from their minister, whose office and duty it is to try to convince them of the necessity of striving to get into the kingdom of heaven. But if such careless creatures will not hear us, yet they ought to hear him who has the power of life and death, and who says, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to life; and few there be that find it," Matt. vii. 13, 14.

As soon as these great numbers, who are going through the wide gate and in the broad way, see any of their acquaintance beginning to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and to walk in the narrow way, immediately they are offended, and they try to stop them with urging the authority of the text, "Be not righteous over-much." Why, say they, cannot you be content with the religion of your forefathers? You used to keep to your church, and you lived as good a life as any of your neighbours, and you were righteous enough; what occasion is there then for so many prayers, and sermons, and sacraments? Indeed you carry things too far; and if you do not stop in time, you will quite ruin your character.

This is their manner of talking to every man who is determined to save his soul. As soon as he begins to live differently from his neighbours, and refuses to join with them in their way of murdering their time, they mark him out for a precise, godly fellow. They think he makes more ado about religion than need be; and if, after many trials, they cannot laugh him out of his oddities, they heartily despise him for an over-righteous fool.

But if the same man should be convinced of the great change which Chris-

tianity ought to make in him; if he begin to talk of the necessity of the new birth, and of the Holy Spirit's beginning and carrying on a saving work of grace in his heart, without which no man is a Christian, but in name; then worldly men are thoroughly provoked: they cannot bear this enthusiastic stuff. But if he insist further upon the necessity of Christ's righteousness, without which no sinner can be accepted and justified before God, and that his righteousness is imputed to the sinner by faith only, without any previous good works; although it be productive of all good works; for they are all the fruits of righteousness; these seem to worldly men the wild notions of a distempered brain. If he prove these points, and enforce them from plain passages of scripture, they are ever ready to object, What! shall we not be accepted if we do all the good we can; if we do not harm any one, but pay every one his own, and keep strict to our church, and go to the sacrament, as often as we have time to prepare? Is not this being righteous enough? And although we fail sometimes, (as who does not?) yet is not God merciful, and will he not for Christ's sake forgive us? These worldly men know of no righteousness but what consists in outward duties, in a mere outside conformity to some parts of the law. They forget that the law is spiritual, reaching to the very thoughts of the heart; and perfect, allowing of no offence, nor offering a pardon for the least, but pronouncing him guilty who offendeth in one point, and under guilt he must lie for ever, as to any thing he can do, unless he be justified freely by grace through the righteousness of the Lord Christ. Whoever insists upon these things is sure to be reckoned in the number of the over-righteous, and will certainly have this caution given him—"Be not righteous over-much."

It is certain, then, that the meaning of the text is generally mistaken. Natural men fancy it commands them not to take too much pains about saving their souls, nor to be singularly religious, but to be content to live according to the course and fashion of the world. More than this, is being righteous overmuch. Besides, many serious persons do not understand the text, and therefore have not an answer ready for their adversaries, who are at every turn misapplying this scripture, and putting a wrong sense upon it. The doctrine which it teaches ought also to be frequently inculcated and enforced, being one of the fundamental articles of our most holy faith. For these reasons, I have determined to give the passage a particular consideration; and will endeavour to show,

First, Negatively, what the words do not mean;

Secondly, What is their positive and precise meaning; and

Thirdly, I shall bring some arguments to prove the doctrine contained in them. And while I am speaking to these points, may the Lord God open all your understandings clearly to see his mind and will in this scripture, and prepare your hearts to practise the duty which it enforces. May his good Spirit be with us for these gracious purposes, while I am

First, Showing what the words do not mean. They are generally understood in a wrong sense. People fancy they contain a caution against attaining too much of the righteousness which is of the law; whereas, that is impossible. A man cannot have too much legal righteousness. Let him keep the law always and perfectly in its spiritual nature, and in its full extent, yet he can be but righteous. He does not perform more than the law requires; he only pays it its just demands: for the love of God and the love of our neighbour comprehend the whole law. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Now we cannot love God too much, nor yet our neighbour, since we are required to love him as ourselves; and therefore if we love God with all the heart and soul, and mind and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves, yet we only do our duty; we do no more than is commanded us, and consequently we are only righteous, but not righteous over-much. But

Secondly, The scripture declares, there is no man living who so perfectly loveth God and his neighbour, as to attain the righteousness which is of the law. All have sinned, and have thereby robbed God of that love, and his law of that service, which are their due; and all are therefore unrighteous. The Psalmist declares, Psal. liii. 1, "there is none that doeth good," which words the apostle

cites in this manner, Rom. iii. 9, 10: "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." Now, since there is none so righteous, and much less more righteous, than the law requires, consequently, there can be none, no, not one, righteous over-much.

Thirdly, To this agree the words of our blessed Saviour, Luke xvii. 10: "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." Who does all those things which are commanded him? Not one: for all have sinned. But supposing he did, yet he would be only as righteous as the law requires. He would not be righteous over-much, because he would only do that which was his duty to do.

A fourth argument may be taken from hence: That any man living can be over righteous, and do more than the law requires, is a Popish tenet, exploded by the whole Protestant church, and particularly by the church of England, in her 14th article.

"*Of Works of Supererogation.*—Voluntary works, besides over and above God's commandments, which they (the Papists) call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety; for by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, we are unprofitable servants." This article condemns the general interpretation put upon the text, and declares that it cannot be maintained without arrogancy and impiety. To these arguments I will here add a

Fifth, Taken from the character given in this verse, of the men who would be over righteous, namely, that they thereby destroy themselves; the righteousness which they are seeking will bring upon them destruction. "Be not righteous over-much: Why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" This single circumstance will help us to determine what kind of righteousness it cannot be: for it cannot be the righteousness of the law. This promises life to him that keeps it—"Do this and thou shalt live," and therefore this cannot be a destroying righteousness. Indeed, if after a man has broken the law, he afterwards turns to it for righteousness, and hopes, by his keeping of it, to be made righteous, then he will destroy himself; because the law promises life only to perfect obedience, and threatens to put them, who offend in one point, under the curse: for he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all. This indeed is a destroying righteousness opposite to which is the righteousness of the gospel. It is to save sinners from being destroyed by the law. It was wrought out for them by the God man, Christ Jesus, and is imputed unto them by faith; and when they with the heart believe in it, they are then saved from destruction. Of this saving righteousness it is impossible a man should have too much. He must have all that is needful for his justification, and more than he needs he cannot have. He wants righteousness in an infinite degree, such as none can give him but the Lord our righteousness; and without this he cannot be saved.

It is evident, then, that the text speaks of a righteousness, to which if a man trust, it will destroy him; which cannot be the righteousness of the law; for this promises life to them who keep it; nor yet the righteousness of the gospel; for this promises pardon and life to them who have broken the law, but believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And since it is neither the righteousness of the law, nor of the gospel, I come now, under my second general head, to consider what is the positive precise meaning of the text, and what is the false pretended righteousness of which it treats.

The context may lead us to the true meaning. In what sense a man is commanded not to be righteous over-much, may appear from the following words, "Neither make thyself over-wise." How can a man be over-wise? Certainly he cannot know too much. Knowledge is part of the image of God in the soul, as the apostle teaches: "The new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 10. A man cannot be too wise; but he may think and speak of his own wisdom more highly than he ought; and that is

making himself over-wise. In like manner, righteousness is part of the image of God in the soul, Eph. iv. 24: "And that they put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness." A man cannot possibly be over righteous; he cannot do more than the law requires; but he may think and speak of his fancied righteousness more highly than he ought; and that is making himself over righteous. It is supposing him to be what he is not, which is self-righteousness. In this sense Theodore Beza, one of the great lights of the reformation, understood the passage; for, in his note upon it, he says, "Boast not too much of thine own righteousness and wisdom." He supposed a man's boasting of his righteousness was making himself righteous over-much; and this is really the case. A man cannot possibly have too much righteousness; but he may fancy himself to be righteous when he is not; and if he speak and act according to his own fancy, then he is one of the over righteous. And

Secondly, The true sense of the word agrees with the context. Strictly rendered, they read thus, "Be not thou a great self-justifier;" the original word, which is translated righteous, is in the conjugation Hiphil, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies to make righteous, or to justify; and being here used personally, it stands for a justifier; one who would make himself righteous; and he does it to excess; he justifies himself over-much, pretending to a greater righteousness than he has. This is the meaning of the text, "Be not thou a great self-justifier:" for there is not a righteous man upon earth who doeth good and sinneth not, and consequently there is not one man upon earth righteous enough, much less righteous over-much, except in his own proud conceit. And against this self-righteousness the text cautions us, advising us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. But, granting this to be the meaning of the text, some will say, What necessity was there for this caution? My answer to this is a

Third argument, by which the meaning of the words may be settled. It was always necessary to give men this caution, because no man can be righteous over-much; and yet men have always been trying to make themselves so. It is impossible to do more than the law requires, and it is impossible for fallen man to do all that it requires, and yet his pride puts him upon trying impossibilities. There is a self-righteous spirit in him, which leads him to hope he can, by his keeping of the law, attain to such a righteousness as God will accept, and for it justify him. This appears from the history of the Jews in the Old Testament. Moses often dissuades them from the opinion of their own righteousness; and the prophets enlarge upon this particular. The book of Job treats entirely of it, being professedly to show that no man can be justified before God by any righteousness of his own. Job insists upon it, in his debate with his three friends, that his life and conversation had been such, that he could maintain his own ways before God. "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity; for till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live. I am clean, without transgression; I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me." But he soon changed his opinion after Elihu had found a right indictment against him, and charged him with having said that he was righteous, and should be found so, if God were to weigh him in an even balance. Elihu's arguments brought down and humbled his proud self-righteous spirit, and he confessed, "I have uttered what I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Behold, I am vile; I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The Lord God knew the temper of the Jews, and that they would be always leaning to self-righteousness, and therefore he left this book upon record, to silence all the pleas which they should ever make for the sufficiency of their works towards their justification at his bar. How necessary this book was, we may see clearly from the great degree to which a self-righteous spirit prevailed in our Lord's time; for then the pharisees, and all that made a great show of religion, knew of no righteousness but what they could attain by their own works, and not so much by the works of the moral as of the ceremonial law. They supposed the observance of the ceremonies to be meritorious, and hoped to be made righteous by keeping them strictly. In consequence of this

opinion, the learned doctors, rabbies, and scribes, introduced a vast number of traditions, and thought that by keeping them with the ceremonies, they should be holier than others; and they condemned our Lord, because he would not practise the traditions of the elders, but opposed them, and said that they had made the law of God of none effect by their traditions; they had made the moral law of none effect, because they thought to atone for their offences against it, by keeping the ceremonial law, which also they rendered of none effect, because it was instituted to point out the Messiah, who was to make an atonement for the sins committed against the moral law. Our Lord often preached against the scribes and pharisees, and he never spake such sharp words against any sorts of sinners as against them; for he says, they were farther from the kingdom of God than publicans and harlots. In all his ministry, he never made such a severe discourse as in the 23rd chapter of St. Matthew, where he is exposing the errors of the scribes and pharisees, and, notwithstanding their many long prayers, and alms, and fastings, and pains to make proselytes, and frequent washings, and many other such-like things, which they thought made them righteous, yet he says to them, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" How necessary, then, was the caution in the text to such persons, who thought themselves righteous, and despised others: and is it not still necessary for those who are seeking righteousness by the works of the law? How many thousands and tens of thousands are there now in the world, Protestants as well as Papists, who place righteousness in duties, in living up to the law as near as they can, in keeping clear of gross sins, in going to church, and in hearing and reading the scripture; and if they do all this, they then think themselves safe. But there are some more strict than these, who enjoin themselves a round of duties, set forms of prayers and times of fasting, and give many alms, and never miss the sacrament once a month, and perhaps have some family worship; upon which account they think themselves very good, and can thank God that they are not like other men. If any minister dare attack this false righteousness, they cry out against him as the pharisees did against Christ. If he tell them that he does not speak against what they do, but against the motives upon which they act, not against the thing done, but against the end they propose in doing it, this provokes them more; because it tends to lay open the rottenness of their hearts, which being not cleansed from sin, all their outward and pretended righteousness is only like painting a sepulchre, or washing the outside of a cup, while there is left within all manner of uncleanness.

Since, then, a self-righteous spirit has prevailed, and still prevails in the world, the wise man's caution has been, and is still necessary. He calls to persons of this temper, who are seeking righteousness by the works of the law, and says to them, Why will ye try to justify yourselves by your duties? You are attempting an impossibility; for the law requires absolutely perfect obedience, which you have not paid. You have sinned and you are none of you righteous, no, not one. There is not a righteous man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not, and consequently there is not one who has that unsinning righteousness which the law demands, and without which none can be justified by it. Trust not, then, to your imperfect obedience. It can only destroy you; but seek a better righteousness, even the righteousness of God.

If these arguments be carefully considered, they will, I hope, lead you to the true meaning of the text. The wise man is not speaking against the righteousness of the moral law, nor against the righteousness of the law of faith; but he is dissuading sinners from seeking righteousness by the works of that law which they have broken, and which condemns them. But, trusting to this false righteousness, they must inevitably be destroyed; for it is the righteousness of a sinner, which is a contradiction in terms. It is an unrighteous righteousness: the law knows nothing of it. The righteousness of the law consists in perfect obedience; and one single failing renders the sinner, ever after, absolutely incapable of being made righteous by his keeping the law. This is the doctrine of the text, which, because of the great opposition made to it, I proceed to defend under my third general head. And I will only mention two arguments

the first taken from the righteousness of the law, and the second from the righteousness of the gospel.

The righteousness of the law consists in paying it its due; and that is unsinning obedience. Whoever is legally righteous, must keep the law in its most perfect degree, not offending even in a single thought. He must continue to do all things always and perfectly, as the law requires; and then it will pronounce him righteous, and give him the promised life. But who is thus righteous? Not one: for all have sinned. And how, then, can any one be righteous overmuch? So far from it, no one can be righteous at all by his keeping the law, after he has once broken it; because it immediately brings him in guilty, and condemns him. Having offended in one point, he has thereby lost his claim to the righteousness of the law, as much as if he had offended in all; and therefore he cannot be made righteous by the deeds of that law, which has passed sentence upon him, and given him up into the hands of justice, to suffer the first and second death. While he lies in this miserable helpless state, he can no more do any act which is good and valid in law than a malefactor can under sentence of death; and yet he is so proud as to fancy that he can merit heaven by his dead works. Poor vain creature! he is so full of self as to think he can do all that the law requires, although he has broken it, and although he can do nothing but sin, until he be pardoned and believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God: for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. What great numbers are there amongst us of this self-righteous spirit; who, because they are somewhat stricter in their lives than others, and are more constant attenders upon ordinances, therefore state to themselves, and expect you should give them place according to their own fancied rank of merit! They are still proclaiming, as the pharisees used to do, Make way there; stand by; I am holier than thou. Against this mock-righteousness the text is levelled. The design of it is to strip the self-righteous of all their borrowed plumes, and to convince them that, after they have broken the law, they cannot be made righteous by a partial keeping of it. The wise man would lead them to consider what the moral law is; how far short they come of the obedience it requires; and how imperfect, yea sinful, their works and duties are. And thus he would convince them of their want of a better righteousness than their own. The Jews were exceedingly prone to trust to their own righteousness, and therefore he tried to beat them off from any reliance upon it. When our Lord came, he found them under the influence of the same self-righteous spirit; and in all his preaching he spake with great sharpness against the pretended righteousness of the scribes and pharisees. We have still men of the same spirit among us, whose righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, and yet they hope to enter into the kingdom of heaven. To all such persons the wise man directs his advice, and counsels them not to trust to their works and duties for a righteousness in which they may be justified before God—"Be not ye great self-justifiers. Why will ye destroy yourselves?" Your false righteousness will destroy you if you venture to put your trial upon it at God's bar; for he has already decreed that, since all have sinned, therefore by the deeds of the broken law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

It is certain, then, that the text does not speak against the righteousness of the law, nor yet, secondly, against the righteousness of faith. The law of God is as holy, just, and good as he is, and cannot pass by the least sin. It has made no provision for a pardon, nor given any promise to repentance or to amendment, but requires absolutely perfect unsinning obedience; and upon the first offence it puts the sinners under the curse, and leaves him in the hands of justice to inflict upon him the threatened and deserved punishment. In this state the gospel finds him, and offers him the righteousness of the Lord Christ; but the proud sinner will not submit to be justified by it, until the Holy Spirit preach the law to his conscience, and convince him of its holy, spiritual, and perfect nature, upon which he feels guilt, conscience accuses and condemns him, and he sees no righteousness in his fancied good works to rely upon, but finds he must go out of himself for a righteousness, in which he may appear before God. Then the Holy Spirit convinces him of Christ's righteousness, how infinitely perfect it is,

and how safely he may trust to it, and gives him faith to apprehend it, and to apply it to himself for his justification. And then he no longer goes about to establish his own righteousness, but submits to the righteousness of God. Against this the wise man cannot caution us. We all want it; and over-much of it we cannot have. It is the righteousness of God, as perfect as God is, and the divine Person, who wrought it out by his obedience and sufferings, humbled himself to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Believers are not only righteous in him, but righteousness, and that the righteousness of God too, against which law and justice cannot make any exception; therefore of this righteousness, though not of their own, may they boast all the day long. The merits of it are their justification; the fruits of it are their sanctification: and when they come to heaven, this righteousness will be their everlasting robe of glory; and to sing his praises, who clothed them with it, will be their employment and happiness for ever and ever. Surely, then, the wise man's caution in the text was not levelled against this all-perfect and glorious righteousness? No. He knew the inestimable value of it, and intended to recommend it by detecting that false righteousness, upon which sinners are apt to rest, and see not their want of a better. This was his design, which having proved and established by several arguments, I shall only add two or three practical observations upon what has been said.

This greatly mistaken text is, I hope, now set right, and the meaning of it is made plain and clear. The wise man did not intend to speak against the righteousness of the law, nor against the righteousness of faith, but against a false righteousness, which was then, and is still, in the world. How many are there, who, after they have broken the law, think of being justified by keeping it better, and hope to make themselves very good, and righteous enough by their works and duties? To every such person the wise man says, "Be not thou a great self-justifier. Why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" But very few will take his advice. There is a generation of men, proud, and self-righteous, who think their own works can recommend them to God. Although they have sinned, yet they fancy that duties can atone for sins. The Jews were much addicted to this error, and the apocryphal books are full of it. In our Lord's time we find the religious among the Jews placing righteousness in works. Our modern pharisees copy exactly after them, and refuse to attend to the wise man's caution in the text. These over righteous ones make a saviour of their duties, and hope to merit heaven by their works; and yet, alas! their works are but few, and these very imperfect. Their righteousness is chiefly negative, consisting in doing no harm, in not murdering, or stealing, or getting drunk, or breaking the commandments, outwardly. Then they are what you call very good sort of people. But if they keep close to their church, and go to prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, and on a saint's day, if they have nothing else to do; and will not play at cards, or go to the play-house on Saturday night before the sacrament, although they have no objection against going on Monday after they received it; oh, these are your mighty good people indeed! Who are righteous, if they are not? But if they go to the sacrament once a month, and use the new week's preparation, and follow it strictly; or if they miss any of the prayers through an engagement in the evening, they will be sure to say them all the next morning; and if they have some new book of devotion, out of which they say their formal task, morning and evening, like the stupid Papists gabbling over the bead-roll of their Ave-Marias and Paternosters; these are our great saints. Who shall go to heaven, if they do not? These, like their predecessors of old, think themselves righteous, and despise others. Their pride deceives them, and hinders them from submitting to the righteousness of God. They are too proud to submit. The knowledge of the law and the knowledge of themselves would humble them. But they are so ignorant of the law, as to believe that by doing some of its duties they shall be made righteous enough; and they are so ignorant of the plague of their own hearts, as to see no necessity for an inward change. They cannot be persuaded but they have very good hearts, and therefore they have no reason to pray with the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Without this clean heart and right spirit, they have only the form

and outside of Christians. The life and power is wanting; and Christ may say to them, as he did to the church of Sardis, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name; that thou livest, and art dead."

But if this be the case, some will be apt to say, Why need we do any good works, if they be not meritorious? Why need we to go to church, and pray, and hear and read the word, and go to the sacrament, and do good, if all this be no part of our righteousness before God? It certainly is not: "for by grace are ye saved," says the apostle, "through faith: not of works, lest any man should boast." And to this doctrine the whole Protestant church subscribes, and all the Papists deny it. The reformers were called Protestants, because they protested chiefly against this blasphemous tenet of Popery; namely, that works merit towards a sinner's justification before God. This is the grand distinction between us and the Papists, and yet, alas! this distinction is wearing out. What great numbers have we among us, who trust to their own fancied good works for acceptance with God? In this point, and it is a very leading one, they are perfectly agreed with the Papists. They are both great self-justifiers, having at least equal, if not superior, merit to Christ in the matter of their justification. Hear the form of monkish absolution, in which the doctrine of merit is thus taught;—"God forgive thee, my brother, the merit of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the blessed saint Mary, always a virgin, and of all the saints, the merit of thine order, the strictness of thy religion, the humility of thy confession, and contrition of thy heart, the good works which thou hast done and shalt do for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, be unto thee available for the remission of thy sins, the increase of desert and grace, and the reward of everlasting life. Amen."

What a deal of self-wrought stuff is here; the merit of which, instead of the merit of Christ alone, is said to be available for the remission of sins! And is it not the same with our half-Papist Protestants? Are there not multitudes of them who think that the merit of their church-going, and the strictness of their lives, and the merit of their prayers and alms, and other good works, will justify them before God, or, if they dare not trust wholly to them, yet they hope Christ will supply what is in them deficient? But this is mixing grace and works, which the scripture will not allow to stand together: for if works, wholly or in part, merit our justification, then there would be room for boasting, which God, in his way of justifying sinners by the righteousness of Christ, has absolutely excluded, that no flesh might glory in his presence; Christ being made of God unto sinners all that they want; even wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Since, then, Christ has made an atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness, why will you glory in yourselves, rather than glory in the Lord? Why will you trust in your own fancied righteousness, since nothing but pride could tempt you to glory in it? Your ignorance of Christ's righteousness hinders your seeing how infinitely perfect it is; and your own self-sufficiency will not let you submit to be saved by it; and therefore you go about to establish your own righteousness. You may work for a time upon this plan, and think yourselves safe; you may lull conscience asleep, and deceive yourselves, and deceive others with your fair outside; but the cheat cannot last long: God sees your hearts, and the corruption in them is naked and open to him, although you study to hide it from yourselves. He has declared of you, although you will not believe him, that you are not righteous: for there is none righteous in himself; no, not one. This is his sovereign decree. Oh that your consciences may submit to it, and seek for a righteousness which God will accept at his bar! Dreadful will be the time, if you appear there without a complete and infinitely perfect righteousness. Such there is in Christ, and in none else: and it is offered freely, even to you, ye self-righteous pharisees. You may receive the free gift of his righteousness, if you will renounce your own. And what is your own? What merit can there be in these duties which are done out of pride, done in sin, and done in opposition to the word of God? If you can reject all dependence upon these, the gospel offers to you freely the righteousness of God

for your justification. Oh, that he may dispose you to accept of it, that, being justified by faith, you may have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and may live in the comfortable sense and enjoyment of this peace, until you receive a crown of righteousness, which fadeth not away! Grant this, holy Father, for the all-perfect righteousness' sake of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ! to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, be equal praise, and glory, and dominion, and power, in time and in eternity. *Amen* and *Amen.*

DISCOURSE VII.

UPON THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.—Mark xii. 28—31.

Our blessed Saviour had been disputing with the chief priests, and elders, and the scribes; and, after he had silenced them, they left him and went their way. But they departed with enraged and malicious hearts, determined to take the first opportunity to destroy him; and they sent certain of the pharisees and of the Herodians to catch him in his words. These hypocrites pretended to believe him to be a faithful teacher of the way of God, and to come to him with no other view than to desire his opinion upon a very difficult case; namely, Whether it was lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? Our Lord solved this difficult question in a manner that astonished his very adversaries; for he, knowing their wicked hearts, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny. And when they had brought it, he said, Whose image and superscription is this upon it? And they answered, Cæsar's. Then, said he, Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. As soon as he had silenced them, certain of the sadducees came with a case out of the law, which they thought he was not able to solve; but he presently showed them, that their error arose from their ignorance of scripture; and he put them to silence. While he was confuting them with the authority of Moses, the pharisees were gathered together against him, and one of them, being a scribe, learned in the law, having heard him reasoning with the chief priests, then with the Herodians, and afterwards with the sadducees, and perceiving that he had answered them well, was willing to try him with a question out of the law. The scribe asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. And the scribe said unto him, Well, master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

In this passage we have the sum and substance of vital and practical religion. The first and greatest commandment is the love of God, arising from the right knowledge of his essence and personality; and the second is like unto it; namely, the love of our neighbour, founded upon the true love of God. There is none other commandment greater than these; for upon these two hang all the law and the prophets: and since these two are the greatest, they therefore deserve

our greatest attention. Our Lord demands it of us in the text. What he enjoins for the two greatest commandments we ought to esteem such, and to study them most, and to practise them best. To that end, let us consider them carefully; and may his good Spirit open our understandings to comprehend them and dispose our hearts to love them, and give us grace and strength to practise them agreeably to his holy will!

The first commandment consists of two parts—the knowledge of God, and the love of God. The true knowledge of God is contained in these words: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And the nature and degree of love to God is thus described: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength. I shall confine myself at present to the first of these particulars, purposing, through divine assistance, to explain and enforce what is laid down in the text concerning the true knowledge of God, reserving the other parts of the text for some future opportunity.

The first and chief point in our religious inquiries is, to discover what God is. This is the fundamental article, upon which all the rest depend. We must know the nature and personality of God before we can serve and love him; and therefore our blessed Saviour very properly places the knowledge of God before the love of him. We cannot love what we know nothing of. Ignorance of God cannot possibly beget love of him. If there be very dark and confused ideas of him in the understanding, there cannot be much true love of him in the heart: for which reason the text determines and fixes the proper object of worship before it requires the love and service which is to be paid him. Our Lord begins with the knowledge of the true God, and does not purpose any thing new upon this point, but goes to the law and to the testimony. He cites a passage from Deut. vi. 4, in which the divine essence and personality are clearly stated: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." This is a command to the whole Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, to hearken to what the Lord God says concerning himself. He calls to them, and requires them to hear him: "Hear, O Israel!" by which means it becomes a matter of duty; and we are indispensably bound to attend to this revelation of his will. He has not left us at liberty to think what we please about his essence and his personality, because he has revealed what we are to believe about both. And it was necessary he should do this, because there is no religion without a God, and no true religion without the true God. How should we know what religious service to perform, if we were ignorant of the proper object of worship? It being absolutely necessary that we should know God, the knowledge of him is therefore revealed, and settled, in the first part of the greatest commandment. We are not left to reasoning about the being of God from the light of nature, or from philosophy or metaphysics; but the scripture has fixed our creed, and we must abide by it; otherwise we cannot keep the following parts of the text: we cannot love God and our neighbour aright, unless we first know what God is. Since this is a material point in our present inquiry, and not thoroughly understood, I will endeavour to prove the necessity of settling the proper object of worship, before the worship due to him can be paid. It is very certain, there can be no salvation without belief in God. An atheist cannot be saved. He that cometh to God must believe that he is; but the atheist denies his very being, denies that God is, and thereby withdraws all allegiance from him. Now, if a man cannot be saved without believing in God, consequently he cannot be saved without believing in the true God; for a false God is no God at all; it is a mere idol, a nothing in the world. Whoever pays his service and worship to this false god, is an idolater, and guilty of high treason against the supreme majesty of heaven. If any of you, who owe your allegiance to King George, were to go to Rome and pay it to the pretender; in what light would the law consider your proceeding? Would not it try you for a capital offence, and, if found guilty, would not it deprive you of your fortune and life? The law of the most high God treats those who withdraw their allegiance from him in the same manner, having already passed sentence upon them, and decreed that idolaters shall not inherit the kingdom of Christ, and of God.

Since then the true object of worship must first be known before we can worship him aright, how are we to come to the knowledge of him? This is the next

step in our present inquiry. And who shall determine this point for us? What authority shall we abide by? Shall scripture or reason decide? If scripture be judge, its determination is clear. What words can be plainer than these are? "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? No. It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea," Job xi. 7, 8, 9; entirely out of the reach of our faculties. The reason of this is assigned in Matt. xi. 27: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him:" no man, therefore, be he ever so wise and learned, knoweth God the Father, but by the revelation of his Son. And to this agree the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 21: "The world by wisdom knew not God." The world by such wisdom, as it could attain, was not able to discover the true God.

If these testimonies of holy writ be not suffered to determine the point, it is not because they are of doubtful interpretation (for words cannot speak plainer), but because you would have the matter tried before some other judge. Well, then, let us hear what reason says: but we will not hearken to its proud boastings of what it can discover: we will examine matter of fact, and inquire what it has discovered. Did reason ever find out God? and did any reasoners ever find out the almighty to perfection? Who were the men? When, where, did they live? In the refined and enlightened ages of Greece? Tell us, ye disputers of this world, did your Aristotle, or any of his followers, with their subtle reasoning, attain to the knowledge of God? It is an undoubted truth, that they did not. And did any of the other Greek philosophers succeed better in their inquiries? No; not one of them. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and fell into gross idolatry along with the ignorant vulgar: for they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things. But if the Greeks failed, did not the learned Romans find out God? No; not one of them ever discovered what God was. The Roman philosophers, aided and assisted with all the discoveries of the Greeks, yet remained as ignorant of God as they had been. Tully has left us a curious treatise upon the nature of the gods, in which he has demonstrated the apostle's proposition, that the world by wisdom knew not God; for in this volume there is not a conjecture or a hint about the nature of the true God. After the fruitless inquiries of such a genius, I need not bring any other arguments to prove that the Romans, with all their learning and refinement, knew not God. Their reason was not equal to the task. And where shall we find greater reasoners? Did any man ever make a better use of his reasoning faculties than Tully? And yet, with all his searching, he could not find out God. In these instances we see the utmost stretch of reason, and what it can discover. Indeed, it boasts great things, and pretends, by the help of metaphysics, to discover the secrets of the spiritual world; but these are vain boastings. Matter of fact disproves them: for there was not one reasoner in Greece or Rome who discovered the true God. These men came the nearest to the truth, who erected an altar to the unknown God; by which they held forth and exposed the weakness of human reason, since, in one of the most famous universities of the heathen world, the philosophers worshipped an unknown God. How weak and groundless, then, are the boastings of our modern unbelievers, who pretend to discover what God is by the mere dint of reason! What have our Arians and deists discovered of him? Do they know more of God than the philosophers did? No. They have indeed greater helps, but by rejecting them their pride is greater, and their ignorance appears more manifest; for they have left revelation, and have invented to themselves as empty an idol as any heathen philosopher ever worshipped. They rejected the Godhead of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, and have imagined to themselves a god existing in one person, infinitely extended, filling infinite space, and many other such like chimerical attributes. And this idol, this nothing in the world, is become the fashionable divinity of our times: but its worshippers are all traitors: every act of worship paid to this idol is high treason: for, by such act, men withdraw their allegiance from

the true God, and pay it to what has no more divinity than stocks and stones. And ought not the servants of the most high God kindly to admonish their fellow-creatures of their guilt, when they see them seduced by this dangerous heresy? And if the watchmen give them not warning, will they not be partakers with them in their sins? If we hold our peace, they will perish; but their blood will God require at our hands. So that, as well for the sake of our own souls, as of theirs, we ought to speak plainly upon this subject, and bring it to a matter of self-examination. Let each of us put these questions to himself:—Is it so, then, that there can be no true worship or love of God, unless it be paid to the true God? Have I, then, the right object of worship for my God? How was I brought to the knowledge of him? for this is the best way to discover the certainty of what, I think, I know of him. Did I find him out by the light of reason? And did metaphysics help me to find him out to perfection? If I have taken this method, I have been deceiving myself; for the world by its reason never found out God. Or was I brought to the knowledge of him in this way? Was I convinced of sin, and humbled under the sense of it? and did I then find myself fallen from God, and alienated from the life of God, so that I had no means of discovering his nature and perfections, but as revealed by his word and by his Spirit? Did I read the word, and pray for the Holy Spirit to open and to explain it, that I might come to the knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent? And am I still in this humble, teachable frame of mind, reading the word, and praying for the teachings of the Spirit of God?—If this be your case, happy are ye. God has promised, and his word cannot be broken. Ask and ye shall have. Ask and ye shall have this great promise of the new covenant fulfilled to you, Jer. xxxi. 34: "And they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord." He will teach you the knowledge of himself, and will manifest to you his essence and his personality. You shall know him as he has been pleased to reveal himself in the text, of which we have the whole of what is contained in the sacred volume; for here he declares what his essence is; he is one Jehovah; and what the persons in this one Jehovah are; they are Alehim. Jehovah our Alehim is one Jehovah. This proposition is one of the deep things of God, which he hath revealed unto us by his Spirit, and which contains more than can be written in many volumes. Each word has a rich copiousness, and explains to us many treasures of divine truth. May that Lord and God, in whom are laid up all the riches of grace and knowledge, open them to you at this time, that you may understand the will and mind of the Lord in his great and glorious name Jehovah.

The word translated Lord, is, in the original, Jehovah; which signifies a manner of existence peculiar and proper to the most high God. He is the only self-existent essence. All other beings owe their existence to his will and pleasure, and depend on him for life and breath, and all things; but he exists by a necessity of nature, and this necessary existence is the meaning of the word Jehovah. We cannot fully comprehend the idea conveyed by this word, because we are not acquainted with the manner of necessary existence. The wisest man upon earth cannot describe in what manner any material object exists; for the atoms, of which bodies are composed, fall not under the observation of our senses. We know that gold differs from water; but we are ignorant of their constituent particles, which make them differ, so that we confessedly know not the manner of their existence; and the plain reason is, gold and water do exist in a different manner, but our senses cannot discover how their particles or atoms differ. And since we know not the manner of the existence of the material bodies with which ourselves are conversant, how absurd would it be for any man to pretend to know the manner of the existence of a spiritual being! How presumptuous, then, would it be for any man to undertake to describe how Jehovah exists, and rashly to affirm that he exists in a manner which excludes all personality, while this very man does not know the manner of the existence of any one thing in the world. And yet every little philosopher, who has but just learned to reason upon the objects which are within his reach, pretends to reason about the nature and

attributes of God; and every minute infidel undertakes to prove by metaphysics, and one of them, more proud and ignorant than the rest, thought he could prove *à priori*, that Jehovah exists in one person, although Jehovah himself declares he does not. If these men would attend to the meaning of the name Jehovah, it might correct some of their mistakes. It signifies necessary existence. Now, from whence shall we form a perfect idea of this word? We have no idea but from our senses, and there is no object within the reach of our senses, which exists by a necessity of nature. All these Jehovah had formed and made; consequently they can only give us ideas of dependent existence. There is but one Jehovah, the text says, and he exists in a manner, of which no other thing can give us a perfect idea; and therefore we can have no reason to reject the account which God has given us of the manner of his existence; but if we act consistently, we must receive and abide by the revealed account, which teaches us that Jehovah is the self-existent essence, and that this essence is one—one Jehovah; but the Alehim, the persons in Jehovah, are three. There was no doubt in those ancient times about the personality: the scripture guards most the unity of the essence; and, while it affirms the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be of the self-existent essence, it, at the same time, teaches us that these three are one—one in essence, but three in persons.

The personality in Jehovah is described in the text by the word Alehim, which is in the plural number, and acknowledged to be so by the Jews as well as Christians; and if they had not owned it, yet the sense of the passage would lead us to seek for a plural interpretation, because there was no need for a revelation to teach us that Jehovah, our one Alehim, is one Jehovah, which is no more than that one is one. But the word Alehim being plural, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, being Alehim, it was necessary to reveal to us the unity of the essence, and to teach us that these three persons were one Jehovah, and therefore, being of the self-existent essence, none is before or after other; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are coeternal together, and coequal Each of the persons is Jehovah. The Father is Jehovah, as we read Isa. lxiv. 8: "But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father." The Son is Jehovah, Isa. xlv. 21. "Who hath declared this from ancient time? Have not I Jehovah? and there is no god else beside me; a just God and a Saviour:" here the Son, our Saviour, is called Jehovah. And the Holy Spirit is Jehovah, Isaiah xi. 2: "The Spirit Jehovah shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding," &c.

Each of the persons is called Alehim. The Father is so called, 1 Chron. xxix. 10: "And David said, Blessed be thou Jehovah, Alehim of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever." The Son is Alehim, Isaiah xlv. 21: "There is no Alehim else beside me; a just God and a Saviour." The Holy Spirit is Alehim, Exodus xxxi. 3: "I have filled Bezaleel with the Spirit Alehim," not of the Alehim; the Hebrew is with the Spirit Alehim; so that the Spirit is the Alehim. These scriptures confirm the doctrine of the text; namely, that Jehovah is one, and that, in the unity of Jehovah, there are three Alehim; which word does not signify their manner of existence. Jehovah denotes that; but it is a relative word, descriptive of the gracious offices of the eternal three in the economy of man's redemption. And neither the personality expressed by its being plural, nor its meaning, are retained by our translators in the singular word God. God is no more the sense of Alehim, than goodness is. And if the translators could not find a proper word in our language, they should have given a definition of it in the first place they met with it in the Bible, and then have retained the Hebrew name ever afterwards. By their neglect, our people are kept in ignorance of this gracious name, under which Jehovah would have himself to be known. It belongs to the covenant of grace, and is descriptive of the acts and offices of the eternal three in the glorious plan of man's salvation, and it signifies the binding act of the covenant—the obligation entered into upon oath to fulfil it. This is the sense of Aleh, the root from whence Alehim is derived; and there is no other root from whence it can be derived without offering great violence to the established rules of the Hebrew tongue. The oath of God is often mentioned in scripture, and the people's entering into it is beautifully described, Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12: "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your

God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath." God is here said to have made an oath, emphatically styled his oath, because it was the oath of the covenant from whence the name Alehim is taken.

If you ask, when was this covenant made by oath, and by whom, and for what end? The scripture answers those points very clearly.

The covenant was made before the world began, as Titus i. 2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Was not this promise the oath of the covenant? What else could it be? God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began, and foreordained, as 1 Peter i. 20, that Christ should be the Lamb, who should take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. This was foreordained by an eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph. iii. 11. What is called, in the scripture, the purpose, promise, and foreordination of God, was the covenant of grace which was made before the world began; yea, by an eternal purpose, and from which the divine persons who confirmed this covenant by an oath are called Alehim; and as the covenant was made before the world began, they therefore took their name from it, and are described by it, before the creation, in the first chapter of Genesis. They had done some act before, from which this name was taken. Now it signifies to confirm any thing by oath; therefore they had confirmed something by oath before the world began; and what it was these scriptures determine, which speak of the purpose, counsel, promise, and foreordination of God made before all worlds, to bring many sons unto glory by Jesus Christ. This was the design of the purpose, counsel, &c., and the persons who designed this are the three in Jehovah: for each of them is called Jehovah, and each of them is called Alehim, because each person in Jehovah had a distinct office in the economy of the covenant. The Father undertook to demand full satisfaction for sin; therefore he is called a jealous God and a consuming fire. Christ undertook to pay this satisfaction, and is therefore called God the Saviour; and the Holy Spirit covenanted to apply and to render effectual the benefit of Christ's satisfaction to believers, and therefore his constant name is Spirit, which word signifies the air that we breathe, on which our animal life depends, as our spiritual life does on his inspiration. Now, since the divine persons have entered into a covenant, and do sustain those distinct offices in it, and since our salvation depends upon the knowledge of these truths, was it not an act of infinite love and condescension for the divine persons in Jehovah to take the gracious name of Alehim, and to reveal themselves to us, as persons bound by the obligation of an oath to carry the covenant of grace into execution?

If you ask, what necessity there was for this oath? It was necessary only on our parts, and it was an act of astonishing mercy, and will demand our everlasting tribute of praise, that God would vouchsafe to give convinced sinners such encouragement to hope for mercy, as to bind himself by two immutable things to save them. The apostle, Heb. vi. 16, 17, 18, thus speaks of this wonderful instance of God's love: "An oath for confirmation is among men an end of all strife; wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." In this scripture the apostle describes the counsel, or the covenant of God to save sinners; and this was confirmed by an oath; and the reason of the oath was for the sake of the heirs of promise, that they might have two immutable things to rest their faith upon; namely, the immutable counsel and the immutable oath of God; and these ought to silence all doubts in the heirs of promise, because it is impossible that either of them should be broken.

These authorities may suffice to determine the meaning of the divine name Alehim. It is expressive of the personality in Jehovah, and denotes what the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the three Alehim, have covenanted upon oath to do for the salvation of sinners. Alehim signifies the Trinity in covenant, and particularly expresses the oath, which was the binding act of the covenant, and

thereby it denotes the most merciful relation in which divine love could manifest itself; a relation productive of the richest blessings of time and of eternity. Jehovah is a name of majesty and greatness. Alehim is a name of grace and mercy. Jehovah expresses the self-existence of the Godhead, and the infinite difference between his manner of existing and that of his dependent creatures; and after they had sinned, it was to them a name of terror: whereas Alehim expresses nothing but tender love and abundant mercy to returning sinners: for the covenant was made for such, and it was confirmed by an oath, that they might place their whole trust and confidence on what the Trinity had covenanted to do for them and for their salvation: for the Father, although he be the avenger of sin, yet has been satisfied with the obedience and sufferings of his coequal and coeternal Son, and will be satisfied with all those who submit to be saved by his righteousness; and the Holy Spirit will influence them to accept the righteousness of God for their justification, and he will work mightily in them to enable them to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, until he bring them safe to glory.—These are the mercies promised in the covenant of grace, and expressed by the divine name Alehim. How greatly, then, should this name encourage convinced sinners to come and ask the covenant mercies? And what strong consolation does it give them, when they flee for refuge to Jesus Christ, and to lay hold of the hope set before them in him?

From what has been said, it appears that the first part of the commandment, relating to God, is the right knowledge of him; and what we are required to believe concerning his essence and personality is described in these words: "Hear, O Israel; Jehovah our Alehim is one Jehovah." Jehovah, the self-existent essence, who is our Alehim, our Trinity, bound by the oath of the covenant to save sinners, these three in covenant, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not before nor after other, greater or less than another, but they are of one and the same self-existent essence; these three are one Jehovah; the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity are one Jehovah.

This, my brethren, is the doctrine of the text, which the Lord God himself calls upon you to hear: "Hear, O Israel." And have you heard him? Have you received his account of the divine essence and personality? If not, why do you reject it? Is not his command a law? and are you not bound to believe what the Lord has revealed concerning himself?

Perhaps you think the revealed account is not established upon sufficient authority. This point does not come under consideration at present. We are only treating of the doctrine; and what can you object against it, as it has been now stated? Why, say some, I still think, after all that you have said, the doctrine is inconsistent; for you are forced to maintain that three are one. Nay, we maintain no such contradiction; for the Trinity is not three and one in the same respect, but three in person and one in essence. The air, which is reduced to atoms in the action of fire, and the light which comes from it, and the gross spirit of the air which feeds the fire—these three conditions of the air are one in essence; and is it any contradiction to say, these three are one? No, surely. Just so we speak of the essence as one, and of the persons in it as three.

Supposing this to be a good illustration of the doctrine, yet still we cannot receive it, say some, because it is unintelligible. What is unintelligible? The proposition itself is plain: in the self-existent essence there are three persons. You cannot object to the difficulty of the terms, or of your forming a clear idea of what they convey. But you cannot conceive how there can be three persons in one essence. And is this the cause of your unbelief? If you will not believe the doctrine of the Trinity until you comprehend the manner of the divine existence, consider how absurdly you act: for do you know how a spirit exists? No. And yet you believe the existence of an immortal spirit within you. Can you comprehend how an infinite Spirit exists? No. You know not how your own spirit exists; and yet, while you are confessedly ignorant of a finite object, you pretend to be so well acquainted with the mode and manner of existence of an infinite Spirit, as to reject what is revealed in scripture concerning it. Whether this be not acting an absurd part, I leave it to yourselves to judge.

But still you cannot think the scripture doctrine of the Trinity is rational if you go to try it by reason, you forget that the world by reason knew not God.

It did not know him formerly in the learned ages of Greece and Rome. And if then, this enlightened age has discovered how Jehovah exists, let our reasoning infidels demonstrate that he exists in such a manner as absolutely excludes all personality. But this they cannot demonstrate; they know they cannot; and yet they pretend the scripture doctrine of the Trinity is not rational, although they have no reason against it; no good reason, however; none that they dare publicly own. The cause of their unbelief must be ascribed chiefly to their sins. While they live in wilful sin, they cannot know God, because their minds are in total blindness, and will continue so, as long as they continue alienated from the life of God. They must be convinced of sin, and humbled under the sense of it, and sue for mercy, and receive it, and then they will know the blessed Trinity is Jehovah: for no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him by the teaching of his good Spirit. May he, who has the residue of the Spirit, send him to take away ignorance from all unbelievers, hardness of heart and contempt of his word, that they may be converted, and believe to the saving of their souls.

But, besides these more open deniers of the doctrine, we have several of our own people who attend upon the ordinances of the church, and yet are ignorant of this fundamental doctrine. For their sakes we ought to insist upon it, and to explain it as taught in scripture, and in the liturgy of our church, with which the state of the doctrine, as now laid down, is perfectly consistent. The first of the thirty-nine articles treats of faith in the Holy Trinity, and says that in the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and the proper preface in the communion service for Trinity Sunday is more clear and determinate. "It is very meet and right that we should give thanks to thee, who art one God, one Lord; not one only person, but three persons in one substance; for that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without ANY DIFFERENCE or INEQUALITY." These are the testimonies of our church, and they are very full in confirmation of the doctrine which you have now heard. Consider them carefully, my brethren, and beg of God to enlighten your understandings with the knowledge of the truth. Oh that he may manifest it so clearly as that you may know the Father to be your reconciled Father, the Son to be your Almighty Saviour, and the Holy Spirit to be your counsellor and comforter, your strengthener and sanctifier unto the end!

Happy are they who thus know God, or rather are known of God. You, my Christian brethren, enjoy this happiness; for you know in whom you have believed. By faith you have come to God, believing that he is Jehovah, the self-existent essence, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek the mercies of the covenant, which was made by the blessed three in Jehovah, and which is expressed by the gracious name Alehim. You know Jehovah your Alehim, and thus you keep the first part of the great commandment of all—Hear, O Israel; Jehovah our Alehim is one Jehovah. You believe in and worship Jehovah, one in essence and three in person. You are thankful for what is revealed concerning the personality and the merciful offices sustained by the divine persons in the covenant of grace. With your lips and with your lives you are ready to show forth the thankfulness of your hearts, and to follow me to the next part of my text, which treats of the love of Jehovah Alehim. But this I must reserve for the subject of another discourse, only desiring you at present to look up to that Lord and God of whom we have been speaking, and to beseech him to render useful what has been said to all of us. Oh that he would enable us all to make use of the words of our church upon the occasion, and with the prayer of faith to say,

Almighty and everlasting God, who has given unto us, thy servants, grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest one God, world without end. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE VIII.

UPON THE RIGHT LOVE OF THE LORD GOD.

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment; and the second is like; namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.—Mark xii. 28—31.

Our blessed Saviour has delivered, in these words, four very important truths.

First, He teaches us the right knowledge of the Lord God.

Secondly, The right love of him.

Thirdly, The right love of our neighbour, arising from the right love of God; and

Fourthly, The greatness of these commandments: there is none other commandment greater than these.

The first of these particulars has been already treated of. It is contained in these words: Hear, O Israel; Jehovah, our Alehim, is one Jehovah. There are three that have entered into covenant in heaven—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and these three are one—three persons of one essence. This is the revealed account; and this, my brethren, you are bound to receive, if you believe in God: for if you withdraw your allegiance from the three persons in one Jehovah, and pay it to an absolute God existing in one person, you are as guilty of idolatry as if you had twenty thousand gods. This is the case of every deist, who, by rejecting the scripture doctrine of the Trinity in unity, is in as bad a state as the atheist: for what is the difference between him who has no God, and him who has a false God? They are both without the true God in the world, both traitors against the majesty of Jehovah, and both have turned away their ears from hearing his laws. He has commanded them to believe in him as Jehovah Alehim, but they refuse to believe in him. The atheist says there is no Jehovah, and the fool upon record, the deist, hath said in his heart, there are no Alehim; and how, then, can they escape his vengeance, since he has threatened, that they who only forget him shall be punished in everlasting fire? "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." The crime is small to forget God, compared to theirs who deny his very being, or who refuse to worship him as the true God. In either case, they are guilty of high treason; for the Lord God calls upon them to hearken to him. He is about to deliver the first and great commandment, and he requires his people to attend and to receive the law from his mouth—Hear, O Israel! Israel signifies all the people of God, in whatever age or country they live, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. "Hear, O Israel; Jehovah, our Alehim, is one Jehovah." Jehovah is but one; but Alehim is plural, more than one; namely, the three in covenant—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who took this name because the covenant was confirmed by an oath for the sake of the heirs of promise, that they might have two immutable things to rest their faith upon. The right knowledge of God, then, consists in believing, that in Jehovah, the self-existent essence, there are three coequal and coeternal persons, between whom there is no difference or inequality but what is made by the covenant of grace. Their names, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not descriptive of their nature, but of their offices: they are not to teach us in what manner they exist in Jehovah; but they are covenant names, belonging to the offices which the divine persons sustain in the covenant. The scripture does not use these names to teach us how the divine persons exist, but how they act; how they stand related to the heirs of promise, and not what they are in themselves, as persons in Jehovah. This is a truth of great importance, which I have endeavoured to defend, both from the pulpit and from the press; and particularly in a printed

discourse upon the self-existence of Jesus Christ. The true object of worship then, to whom our obedience and love are due, is Jehovah Alehim, according to what is said in the Creed: "the unity in Trinity and the Trinity in unity is to be worshipped." And is this, my brethren, the object of your worship? Do you pay your allegiance to a God in one person, or to Jehovah in Trinity? If you have not been determined to worship Jehovah Alehim, but have broken this first part of the great commandment of all, you cannot keep the other parts; for the love of God depends upon the knowledge of God. How should you love the true God until you know him? But if you know him as he has been pleased to reveal himself to us in the text, as three persons in one essence, and are desirous of paying him that tribute of love which he requires, then you will gladly follow me to my second general head; namely, to the consideration of the right love of the Lord God. And may he be present with us, while we are treating of his love! Oh that he would send his good Spirit to stir up longings in their hearts, who have as yet no desire to love the Lord God; to shed his love abroad in their hearts, who are hungering and thirsting for it; and may both speaker and hearers find their love to God increase from what shall be said upon these words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart d with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." In discoursing upon which I shall

First, Show the nature of the love here commanded.

Secondly, I shall consider whether all men keep this commandment.

Thirdly, If they do not, in what way the gospel directs us to attain the love of God; and then, in order to stir us up to attain it, I will lay before you,

Fourthly, Some of the exceeding great and precious promises to them who love God.

First, The text treats of our love to the Lord God, requiring our love to arise from the knowledge of him. When the understanding perceives what he is, the heart ought to receive him for its chiefest good. As Jehovah, he is the fountain of all good; he is the self-existent essence, through whose power and goodness all other beings exist, and therefore to him they all owe their tribute of love and obedience. As Jehovah Alehim, the Trinity in covenant, he has engaged to bestow upon his redeemed people every grace and every blessing which they stand in need of in time and in eternity, and on this account he has an undoubted claim to their allegiance. When they view him in this light, their hearts should be determined to love him; and when they partake of the graces and blessings of the covenant, they ought to love him out of gratitude. The debt of gratitude is so immense, that they can never repay it, and therefore they are the more obliged to make every possible acknowledgment of their thankfulness They ought to love Jehovah their Alehim with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind, and with all their strength: and yet, when they do love him in this perfect manner, they can only acknowledge the debt; for they leave it still unpaid; and it will be for ever unpaid, as to any return in kind that they can make. They can only love (and what less can they do than love?) the Lord their God, for his infinitely rich blessings; and this love he demands. As Jehovah, he has a right to demand it of all his creatures; and as Alehim he may claim it of every one who partakes of the benefits of the covenant. They ought to love him

"With all the heart." The heart is the seat of affection: all the affections belong to the heart; and the Lord God here claims them all: they are all to centre in him. He is to reign sole monarch of the heart; and the affections are to be his willing subjects, loving him above all things, and in all things. Whatever any of them desire as good, they are to desire it out of love to God; and they are not to give any object a place in their esteem, unless their love to it be a proof of their love and obedience to God. My son, says he, give me thy heart,—all thy heart,—and let me have no rival to share in thy affections. And as he thus demands the love of the immortal spirit within us, so does he, in the next words, claim the affections of the human frame: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

"With all thy soul." The Hebrew word, here rendered *soul*, does not signify the immaterial and immortal spirit, but is generally used in scripture for the parts

concerned in carrying on the circulation of the blood, and in which the appetites of the human frame are placed. These are to be regulated by the love of God, and they are all to be used in his service. The heart, being the commanding and ruling faculty, ought to influence them at all times to act upon a principle of love to their infinitely kind Creator and Benefactor. Every desire and craving, every instinct and passion of the animal faculties, should be brought into such a cheerful subjection to the Lord God, that to do his will should be their delight. There should not be a motion or stirring of desire in any of the appetites but what took its rise from love; for all the soul, the whole human frame, was to be governed and influenced by the perfect love of God. There should not be a desire in any one instinct or appetite but what sprang from divine love; and when carried into act, and gratified, it ought to be invariably directed by the same principle. And the Lord God not only demands the service of all the affections of the immortal spirit, and of all the appetites of the human frame, but the text goes on to claim the service of all the rational faculties; for that is the sense of the Greek word, which is rendered

"With all thy mind." It denotes that power of the mind whereby it deduces one thing from another; it is what the logicians call *discursus*, or the art of reasoning. The mind having before received ideas by simple apprehension, and formed a judgment of them, is then enabled to reason upon them; and this faculty of reasoning is here meant: so that every thing which the mind can reason upon ought to lead it up to God, and to increase its love to God. Reason, with all its powers, should be under the influence of divine love. And thus the Lord God expects us to keep the first and great commandment: he requires all the affections of body, soul, and spirit, and all the reasoning faculties to be invariably fixed upon him; and he would not only have them to be influenced by his love, but he would also have each of them to exert his whole strength in manifesting their love in him:

"And with all thy strength." The love of God must be perfect in kind, in degree, in duration. Whatever strength there is in man, divine love should have the command of it, and the continual use of it. All the powers of soul and body, and of all their faculties, should be directed in every thought, and word, and work, by the love of God; and there should be no abating of their vigour in any respect; but they should be continually carried out with their whole strength into grateful acts of love and obedience.

This is the nature of the love required in the text; and it is required by the Lord God, to whom we are all under infinite obligations, and whom we are bound, by innumerable ties, to love with all the affections of the immortal spirit, and of the human frame, with all our reasoning faculties, and with all our strength. This is the first and great commandment; and whoever keeps it in this perfect manner, fulfils the law of the first table. He cannot have any other God as an object of love or worship, neither can he set up any false worship, nor dishonour the divine name, by taking it in vain, nor forget the time appointed for enjoying communion with his God. How can he break any of these commands while the love of God reigns in his heart and commands all his affections? But if he breaks any one of them, does he not thereby withdraw his love and service from God? And if this be done only once, he has not kept the first and great commandment, but is become a transgressor of the law, and liable to suffer the punishment due to his transgression.

Here, then, there arises an important question, in which you are all nearly concerned; and every one of you should ask his own heart, Have I kept this first and great commandment? The Lord God has an undoubted right to this tribute of perfect love: have I paid it him? Whether you have or not shall be now inquired under my

Second general head:—and it was proposed to consider, whether all men kept this commandment.

Let us examine these two faithful witnesses upon the point—scripture and matter of fact; and by their concurrent testimony let the truth be established. Look around you, my brethren, and see what men's affections appear to be most set upon. What are they coveting with all their hearts, wishing for with all their

souls, and pursuing with all their strength, and in the enjoyment of what do they account themselves happy? Is God in all their thoughts? Is he the chief object of their love, and the great end of all their pursuits? Is gratitude to him the ruling principle of their lives? and do they think themselves most happy when they love him most and serve him best? A very little acquaintance with mankind will soon convince you that God does not reign in their hearts, although his hands have made them and fashioned them, and their life and breath, and all things come from his bounty, and the use of them depends upon his good pleasure. They have forgotten all his benefits, and turned traitor to their sovereign Lord. They have taken up arms, and have entered into rebellion against his lawful government. They have enlisted freely in the service of sin, to fight under the banner of Satan. Their love to sin has drawn them into this unnatural rebellion, and their strong attachment to its pleasures has made them reject the happiness which God offers them. While they are at war with him, he publishes an act of grace, and out of his infinite mercy declares his willingness to forgive them, if they will throw down their arms: but they refuse to receive his free pardon, being not only lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, but also such desperate lovers of pleasure, that they are haters of God. They hate him for denying them the sweet enjoyment of their beloved sins; and they hate him the more for threatening to punish them. And this hatred shows itself openly by their hating his will, his ordinances, his people; yea, by their hating every thing that God loves.

Well might the prophet say, Lord, what is man? What is he indeed! What a most wonderful creature is he, that he should not be afraid to fight against the Almighty, and that he should dare to hate an infinitely perfect God! Oh, surely he is fallen! fallen greatly from his higher state, since he is such a monster of ingratitude as to hate his best friend and benefactor, even the God who gave him those very faculties of body and soul, and who continues the use of them, although he makes them the instruments and weapons of rebellion, and with them opposes God's lawful sovereignty over him.

But, perhaps, some will ask, What! are all men haters of God? Yes; in their natural state every one of them hates him: and this may be demonstrated from their love of what God hates. All have sinned; and what can tempt them all to sin, but the love of it? All men love the world, and place their affections upon the things of it: how could this be, if their hearts were placed upon God, and their affections upon the things of God? If they loved the God of infinite purity, they could not at the same time love the world that lieth in wickedness; because this is setting up their will in opposition to his holy will, in which all enmity consists. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." These two kinds of love cannot be in the same heart; they are at irreconcilable enmity; and yet the love of the world is in the hearts of all natural men: they are turned from the love of God to the love of evil. The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. So says our ninth article: "Fallen man is of his own nature inclined to evil;" his inclinations are turned from the love of God to the love of evil; yea, so entirely turned, that the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are not set upon God, but are set upon evil, and that continually. And this love of evil is deeply rooted in the very nature and frame of man, and has gotten such entire possession of him, that it has made him hate God. This hatred chiefly shows itself by its opposition to the will of God, which is, in fact, opposition to, and hatred of, the person of God; according to what is written by the prophet: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil," Psalm xcvii. 10. To which agree the words of our Lord, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" show your love to me by your love and obedience to my will. Does any natural man show his love in this way? No. His heart is in another interest. He hates the commandments of God; therefore he hates God. There appears a settled fixed hatred in him to the divine ordinances. How little does he read or know of the word of God! Many large volumes he has perused, many novels and play-books he has treasured up in his memory; but the sacred volume, in which God has revealed all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, is neglected. How many are there of us who never read the Bible through in our lives! whereas, if we loved God, we

should certainly read the sweet volume of his grace and love with care and diligence, and should be meditating in it day and night. No reading would be so pleasant, as none would be more improving: but the devil's book is far more perused than God's. We hear of very few parties that meet together to read the scriptures: thank God, there are some! but thousands meet together in this city every evening to study the devil's book. How can these persons love the Lord God with all their hearts, since they hate his revealed will, and can spend three or four, or more, hours every day at a most stupid diversion, and at which God is not in all their thoughts? And as the natural man hates the word, so he hates prayer: it is a vast burden to him. If you propose to him to be of a party, who are going to spend an hour this evening in prayer, you will soon see he has no relish to the duty. He will try to get himself excused, if he can; and if he cannot, it will be to him a most miserable, long, dull hour; and he will be very glad when it is over. The reason is, he has no communion with God, and therefore does not love to converse with him. The things of time and sense please him more than the things of God; yea, so much more, as to render tedious and hateful all the exercises and ordinances of religion. The very table of the Lord is not pleasant to him. God has been pleased to prepare a rich feast for his people; but the natural man has no appetite for it. He has no faith to live upon Christ's broken body, and blood shed; and therefore, perhaps, never was at the Lord's table in his life, unless for some prudential reasons, to please some relations, or to qualify for some good place. And as to the Lord's house, he never goes there but out of form and custom. If he is to see some favourite new play or entertainment, he goes with very exalted spirits to the devil's house; but coming to church is a burden; and when he is there, the service is quite tiresome. He wishes it was over, and the dull sermon was ended. The Lord's day has nothing pleasing to engage his heart. It breaks in upon his business and pleasures, and is the most stupid day in the whole week. If he be a polite man, and of a plentiful fortune, he will show how wearied he is with the divine appointment of this portion of time, by his manner of spending it. The day being got over as well as he can, in visiting and company, he thinks the evening may be spent at an innocent game of cards, or at a concert of music. Can these people love God, who thus demonstrate their enmity to his will and to his ordinances? And if any one reprove them, they will soon express their enmity against him, and will make him feel it too, if they have it in their power. How dwelleth the love of God in such persons? Can love beget hatred? If you love any person, will you do every thing which you know he hates? Certainly this is the way in which hatred shows itself; and therefore, since all men love sin, which God hateth, and love the world and the pleasures and enjoyments of it, and neglect and hate the divine ordinances, it is evident that the love of God is not in them.

This may be the case of the baser sort of men, some may say, but not of the more civilized and polite. Yes, it is the case of all alike. Human learning does not bring men to the knowledge of God, nor politeness to the love of him. What people were more learned and polite than the Romans? and yet they were "haters of God," Rom. i. 30. They had attained to the highest refinement of classical learning, and nevertheless they continued to hate the true God. They were very polite and civilized in their manners to one another, but in their religion no nation was ever more rude and barbarous. Their city was full of idols, and yet they were without God in the world; for his person they rejected by their idolatry, and his most adorable attributes and perfections they hated.

But some may ask, Is there no difference between us, who are born in a Christian country, and others, who have no knowledge of Christ? No; none but what is made by grace. You have many outward privileges in a Christian country; but you do not therefore partake of the love of God; because you partake of these privileges. Is not this matter of fact? Is there not as much love of the world, of riches, pleasures, and honours among nominal Christians, as among Jews or heathens? For in what does a nominal Christian differ from a heathen, but in name? He has, indeed, some outward privileges, but

these cannot of themselves change the inward frame and temper of his mind; because they operate, not mechanically or physically, but by the divine influence upon them; and where this is not present, although Paul should plant, and Apollos should water, yet there would be no increase either of the knowledge or of the love of God.

Does this state of the case offend you, my brethren, because it gives you such mean ideas of human nature? Nay, be not offended at what scripture plainly teaches, and experience demonstrates. Rather search your own hearts, and see whether there be not in you a settled hatred of God. If you examine yourselves by the rule laid down in the text, and if conscience does its duty, you will own yourselves to be guilty of the breach of the first and great commandment. But whether you own it or not, it is an infallible truth. As certainly as God hates sin, so certainly does the unpardoned sinner hate God: for he that loves sin cannot love God. While he hates the mind and will of God, how can he possibly love the person of God? And such haters of God have we all been. We have all loved sin, which is direct enmity against his sovereign will. We have all committed sin, which is open rebellion against his government. Could we have acted in this manner if the love of God had been perfected in us? No, surely. The love of God would never have led us to break his holy laws, to insult his authority, and to provoke his justice; for hereby the wrath of God abideth upon us; and did we indeed love him, how could we bear to be under his wrath, or how could we think of its abiding upon us for ever and ever? These are undoubted proofs of our having failed in our love to God. We have all broken the first and great commandment, and are thereby become transgressors of the law. We are all subject to the pains and penalties threatened to transgression, and are unable to do any thing to deliver ourselves. This is our guilty and helpless state. My brethren, are you convinced of it? This conviction is absolutely necessary: for you can never be brought to love God until you have been made thoroughly sensible that by nature you were haters of God. When the Holy Spirit begins to turn your hearts from sin to righteousness, the first step he takes is to convince you of your former hatred to God and to his will. Under a sense of this, he humbles you, and makes you pray to God for the discovery of his love. Finding yourselves miserable without it, you will earnestly ask it of him who has it to give. But these points come now in order to be considered under my

Third head—Under which I purposed to explain in what way the gospel directs us to attain the love of God. One great design of Christianity was to reform our love, by bringing it back to its proper object, and by fixing it there. By sin we had withdrawn our hearts from God, and placed them upon the things of time and sense; whereby we had not only fallen into a state of guilt, but if we had continued in it, we could not have been happy, no, not in heaven, because we cannot be happy in what we hate. Our hatred would turn heaven itself into a place of torment. Christianity was the gracious contrivance of God, by which we might be brought to love what would make us really and eternally happy; and this it does by raising our affections from the love of the creature to the love of God. It begins this work by convincing us that we have failed in all the duties of the first table, and have broken the great commandment of love, which includes them all. He that is never convinced of this will never see his want of divine love, and therefore will never ask it. Have you, then, been convinced, my brethren, from what has been said, that in your natural state you neither do love God, nor can love him by any means in your own power? If you are not convinced, what I am going to offer will be of no service to you; because it is in vain to show you how to attain the love of God, if you see not the necessity of attaining it. May the God of love himself convince you of this necessity, and help you to follow me with profit in this consideration of the several steps by which the gospel directs sinners to the love of God, and these are three. The

First, Is a lively sense and conviction of their want of the love of God;

Secondly, A clear discovery of what Christ did to manifest the love of the Father, and to reconcile sinners to him; and,

Thirdly, The work of the Holy Spirit in bringing them to the knowledge and experience of the love of God.

The first step towards the attainment of divine love, is a lively sense of the want of it. The Holy Spirit convinces the sinner of his guilt for having withdrawn his love and obedience from the Lord God, and for having thereby robbed him of his due honour and service. The sinner upon this feels what it is to have provoked an almighty God, and in his guilty conscience he has fearful apprehensions of God's anger, and of abiding under his wrath. He finds he should have grovelled on in the sinful love of the creature, if the Holy Spirit had not thus convinced him of his guilt, and made him feel his misery. He now sees he has broken all the first table, and is become a transgressor of the law, and therefore is stirred up in earnest to seek for the sense of God's pardoning love.

This is the Lord's way, in which he brings him to know himself and to experience the emptiness of all creature love; and thus he puts him upon seeking happiness in God. My brethren, have you been made sensible of your want of it? and are you seeking it in him? If you are, you have great reason to be thankful; for you have already some tokens of his love. He has put it into your hearts to seek his favour. May he draw you by the cords of his love until you have a clear discovery of what Christ did to manifest the love of the Father, and to reconcile sinners to him; which is the second step towards the attainment of divine love.

We could never have attained it by any means in our own power, and no mere creature could have attained it for us; because, before the Father would manifest his love to us, he would have all the demands of his law and justice fully answered. While the broken law stood out against us, and justice was concerned to see its pains and penalties inflicted, we could have no peace with God. But Christ undertook the work of reconciliation, by doing all that his law required, and by suffering all that his justice demanded, and thereby making a full atonement for our sins. The law he fully satisfied by his infinitely perfect obedience; for by it he magnified the law, and made it honourable, insomuch, that "by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous," to make them righteous before God, otherwise Christ obeyed in vain. Justice he fully satisfied by his infinitely meritorious sufferings. It was decreed, that without shedding of blood there should be no remission; but it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should obtain remission; wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith to his Father, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, by making myself an offering for sin. This was the Father's will. He accepted the sufferings of the just for the unjust; and when the holy Lamb, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, he was an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. The Father is well pleased with him, and is also well pleased with them, who have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. For the prophet, speaking of them, says, Psalm lxxxv. 2, 3, "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath; thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger." This is the character of God in Christ. His wrath is turned away from his people. For what reason? Are they not sinners even as others? Yes; but he is well pleased with them for Christ's righteousness' sake, through whom he has forgiven their iniquity, and has covered all their sin.

When the sinner, convinced of his want of divine love, is thus satisfied that Christ has paid the full price to obtain it, having answered all the demands of law and justice, and that sinners may now be brought nigh to a reconciled Father, and may taste and see how gracious he is, then he waits for this blessing, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is his work and office to bring convinced sinners to the knowledge and experience of the love of God: and this is the third particular I was to treat of.

The Holy Spirit directs the hearts of awakened and convinced sinners to the love of God in this way and method. He makes them sensible of their wants, and then shows them where they have a supply. He gives them evidence to

believe the all-sufficiency of Christ, whose obedience and sufferings were divine and infinitely meritorious, and made a full and perfect satisfaction for sin. God the Father accepted them as such; and, since his justice was well pleased and satisfied with them, the sinner thinks he may be satisfied with them also: for as there is no objection against them in the court of heaven, so there ought to be none in the court of his conscience. Then the Holy Spirit enables him to put forth an act of faith, and to rely upon Christ as a tried foundation. He casts himself upon Christ's power to save, believing him to be Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty; and, hearing and reading the gracious promises of Christ's readiness to save all that come to him, he sees there is no reason for him to doubt either of Christ's power, or of Christ's love, to fulfil his promises: upon which he is enabled thus to address the Lord Christ:

O almighty and most merciful Saviour, in whom the Father is reconciled to returning sinners; thou hast the residue of the Spirit with thee, by whom they may be reconciled to God: I bless thee, I praise thee, and glorify thee, for the inestimable gift of thy good Spirit, by whom I have been enabled to rest upon thy promises, and to rely upon thy faithfulness to fulfil them, even to me, a miserable, helpless sinner. O Lord, strengthen my faith by the grace of the same Spirit; that it may work by love, but having still more clear evidence of the Father's being reconciled to me, I may love him with all my heart and with all my soul.

With such actings of faith in prayer, God is well pleased; for they are the breathings of his own Spirit in the believer's heart; and he will answer them. He strengthens faith, and increases love, according to what is written, Rom. v. 5: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The Holy Spirit is given to the believer, to bear witness with his Spirit that he is a child of God: and when the word of God and the Spirit of God thus bear their joint testimony to his being beloved of the Father for Christ's sake, then he is rooted and grounded in love, and is disposed, and mightily strengthened in the inner man, to perform every work and labour of love.

Thus the gospel represents the whole Trinity as concerned in directing the sinner's heart into the love of God. The Father forgives all his offences through the atonement of his beloved Son, who did and suffered all that was required by law and justice; and the Holy Spirit disposes the sinner to be reconciled to God, and to believe in his word; and then gives them faith to apply the promises to himself, and to love God, who first loved him. Our love to him arises from the evidence we have of his love to us; for without this evidence an awakened sinner cannot love God. While he looks upon God as the just avenger of his sins, it is impossible that he should love him; and so long as guilt remains in his conscience, he cannot but fear and dread the justice of the Almighty, and these terrors will entirely shut out all love; for it is against nature to love pain: and how, then, can the awakened sinner love that offended God, who is to inflict it upon him? He cannot love him, until he has some sense of God's pardoning love, and of his interest in the covenant of grace. The text declares this truth: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," thy covenant God, not an absolute God, such as the deists worship, but a God related to thee in the covenant of grace. Thy God is a relative term, implying the relation which God stood in to the believer, and which is here expressed by the word Alehim—thy Alehim. The Trinity, bound in covenant to redeem man, are thine, and stand related to thee in all their covenant offices: the Father is thy Father, the Son is thy Saviour, the Holy Spirit is thy counsellor, guide, sanctifier, and strengthener: all the graces and blessings of the covenant are thine, in time and eternity; therefore thou shalt love Jehovah thy Aleheim for these inestimable mercies, with all thy heart and mind, and soul and strength.

My brethren, is this your experience? You were once haters of God: have you been brought to love him, and do you know him to be your reconciled Father? The gospel has revealed no other way of attaining his love, but seeking it through Christ, and receiving it by the grace of his Spirit. Have you, then, sought and received it in this way? If you have, you will gladly follow me to my

Fourth general head; which was to treat of the promises made to them who loved God. These promises are exceeding great, and exceeding precious, containing every covenant-blessing of grace and glory. The Lord has engaged to preserve them that love him, Psalm cxlv. 20, and to keep covenant and mercy with them that love him, Deut. vii. 9; yea, they that love the Lord shall be like the sun, when he goeth forth in his might, Judges v. 31; nothing shall stop their course; afflictions, sickness, temptations, all manner of trials, shall help them forward; for all things shall work together for good to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28. But it is impossible to describe the great things which God hath prepared for them that love him. If a man love me, says Christ, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him, John xiv. 23. This fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the bond of the Spirit, is the greatest happiness which can be enjoyed, next to the crown of life, which God hath promised to them who love him, James i. 12, and who shall be for ever happy in the enjoyment of his love. Are not these promises exceeding great and precious? And on whom, my brethren, can you place your affections, who has any such promises to make you? Can the world bid so high for your hearts? Are its pleasures worthy to be compared with the pleasures laid up at God's right hand for evermore? Are its honours and riches like the honour and riches which come from God? What can sin offer you—what can Satan purpose—what can the flesh covet—that can be put in competition with the blessedness which God has promised to them who love him? If they promise more than God, they are liars; and if you trust them, you will be deceived. But God's promises are like himself, unchangeable. He is faithful and just to fulfil them; and he does fulfil them daily: his people are witnesses for him: they declare, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord hath promised in his word to them that love him. All are come to pass unto them, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Oh, that you were all his witnesses, and knew the happiness of his love! May he shed it abroad in all your hearts for his mercies' sake, and enrich you with the blessings of his love in time and in eternity!

Having considered the nature of the first and great commandment, it behoves us to apply what has been spoken, and make it useful to ourselves. My brethren, have you found any use in it? Are your hearts placed upon the Lord God? Is he the reigning object of your affections? How were you brought to love him? Did you ever find yourselves miserable because you were at enmity with him? And did you seek the Father's love through Christ, as the effect of his obedience and sufferings, hoping that the Father was your Father for the righteousness' sake of his beloved Son? And did you continue in this way, seeking, until you received the faith which worketh by love? If this be your experience, bless God for this unspeakable gift. It becometh you well to be thankful. Praise him with your lips. Praise him with your lives, and give him every testimony of your love, which he requires; especially give him your hearts, and let him reign in them. There let Christ set up his kingdom, and by his sovereign power subdue your enemies and his; for, when Christ dwells in your hearts by faith, ye shall then be rooted and grounded in love, and shall be strengthened with might in the inner man to do his will, and to suffer it. Then your constant language will be, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall any trouble, because painful? Shall any temptation, because strong? Shall any duty, because hard? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Are there any of you, my brethren, who are not thus rejoicing in the love of God, but are wishing and desiring to be in this happy state? From whence arise your desires? Do they come from the conviction of your sin and misery? Do you feel the enmity of your wills, and the rebellion of your hearts against God? and do you therefore wish that, although you are now enemies, yet you may be reconciled to God by the death of his Son? Have not you been trying to do something in part to make a reconciliation with God? And what was the event? Have not all your attempts failed? and have not you been brought to see the insufficiency of your works to make your peace with God? And did

the sense of this send you, as helpless sinners, to the throne of grace, entreating the Lord Christ to be your peace, and to make both one? Is this your experience? If it be, thus far you have been directed aright into the love of God. But who brought you thus far? Is it not he who is to carry on, and to give you the blessing for which you wait. It is the Holy Spirit who has convinced you of your guilt and misery in turning your hearts from God, and who has disposed you to seek his love, and who is also to shed it abroad in your hearts. And this he will do, by giving you the faith which worketh by love. He will enable you to trust God's faithful word, which cannot be broken, and to rely upon his unchangeable promises, which cannot possibly fail of being fulfilled to every one who comes and sues for mercy and favour through the righteousness of the Lord Christ. Thus he will give you power to put forth and to act faith, and to apply the promises to yourselves, whereby he will bring you to see that Christ loved you, and gave himself for you, which will produce love in your hearts, and the fruits of love in your lives. Wait, then, upon him for this blessing. Wait under the word, hoping and praying that he would make it the means of working faith in your hearts: and when it is given unto you to believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, then he will fulfil the work of faith with power; he will support the patience of hope, and he will carry on the labour of love even unto the end.

Perhaps there may be some persons here, who have no desire to love God. They have given up their hearts to other objects, and are pleased with their choice. Oh ye sons of men! how long will ye thus idolize the sinful creature, and rebel against the almighty Creator? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after happiness in the ways of sin? Can these things make you happier than God can? Nay, know ye not, that at the end of your fancied pleasures there is real misery for evermore? And are you making a good bargain? Is it worth your while to give up all hopes of heaven and glory for the sake of some present joys? And what are they? Are they solid and lasting? and do they make you happy through life? Have you no uneasy sensations when you are sometimes alone, or when you are visited with sickness? Does not a troublesome thought then intrude, "What will become of me, if I should die? If I were to be in heaven, I could not be happy; because I love nothing that is there. I have no love for God, nor for his will, nor for his people. I find no pleasure in praising God here. How then could I rejoice in singing his praises hereafter?" If ever your mind has been led to such reflections, how did you get rid of them? Did you try to drive them away by company or diversions? And you succeeded; the melancholy fit wore off; and you thought it a great blessing you were easy again. This single instance is sufficient to demonstrate that you are not happy; and, indeed, it is impossible that you should be so. While your heart is turned from God, it is set upon sin, and sin has no happiness to give. Its promises are all lies, and its enjoyments are all delusions; for it undertakes to make you happy in that to which the Almighty has threatened eternal misery, and the practice of which will bring this misery upon you. Men and brethren! are not these things so? And why, then, will you set your love upon sin? Can it make you perfectly happy? Deal fairly with yourselves. Are you as happy as you would wish to be? You know you are not. I appeal to your own hearts. But if any of you are so desperately deluded as to wish for no other happiness than what the pleasures of sin can give you, yet did you ever consider what would be the end of this delusion.? Oh think upon that; and may the sense of it open your eyes; for surely you are acting a most unnatural and wicked part, to choose eternal misery rather than part with some sinful pleasure. May the God of all grace convince you of your want of his love, and bring you to know and experience the happiness of it! and oh that he may now put it into your hearts to pray for it! May he, the Lord and giver of every good gift, bless what has been now spoken, and render it the means of increasing his love in the hearts of all this congregation! May he pardon our imperfect manner of thinking and speaking of his divine and infinite love; and may he shed it abroad abundantly in all our hearts! Oh that he would send us away inflamed with his love, and

would give us grace to walk in love, continually evidencing our unfeigned love to him by our love to his commandments!

Grant us these our requests, most holy Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom with thee, and the eternal Spirit, three coequal and coeternal persons in one Jehovah, we ascribe the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, now and for ever. *Amen*

DISCOURSE IX.

UPON THE RIGHT LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like; namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.—Mark xii. 28-31.

In these words our blessed Saviour has given us the sum and substance of all practical religion. He has reduced it to two short rules, which are yet so full and copious, that they comprehend all the law and the prophets. The whole scripture was to lead us to the right knowledge of the Lord God, that we might pay him the love and obedience which are his due, and might love our neighbour as ourselves.

I have already discoursed of the two parts of the first commandment, and have endeavoured to explain and to enforce the right knowledge and the right love of the Lord God; and I come now to the second commandment, which is contained in these words of the text: "And the second is like, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The second is like unto the first, because it treats of the same subject, is enforced by the same authority, and is enacted for the same wise and gracious purposes; and the second is further like, because it arises and branches out of the first; since, if any man has the true love of God in his heart, it will evidence and prove itself to be there, by enabling him to love his neighbour as himself. The right love of our neighbour is the fruit and effect of our love of God, and can spring from no other root, especially in the perfect degree here required—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. This is an abridgment of the whole moral law, and comprehends all the duties of the second table. As he who loves God keeps the first table, so he, who loves his neighbour as himself, keeps the second. May the Lord incline all our hearts to keep it; and may his good Spirit render useful and profitable what shall be said,

First, Concerning the inseparable connexion between the two commandments—the love of God and the love of our neighbour.

Secondly, Concerning the nature and extent of the second commandment—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Thirdly, Concerning the scripture method of enabling us to keep this commandment. And then,

Fourthly, I shall make some practical observations upon these particulars

As the first of these points, I lay this down for an evident truth; that the man can have no real love for his neighbour who has not first the love of God in his heart; such a true experimental sense of God's love to him in Christ Jesus, as was treated of in the last discourse; for the love of our neighbour stands upon the love of God: it has no other foundation. Build it upon what you please but this, you will find nothing else strong enough to act against the opposition

of a man's own selfish heart. But as we have many pretended master-builders, who lay another foundation than that is laid; and as some of the most dangerous mistakes in religion arise from building upon these men's foundation; I will therefore bring some arguments to prove the inseparable connexion between the two commandments—The love of God and the love of our neighbour. And

First, a man cannot love his neighbour aright, until he be endued with the love of God; because he has no principle of love in his heart. Man, in his natural state, or, as our church expresses it, man, before he receives the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, has no holy, pure love of any kind. All his affections are placed upon wrong objects and directed to wrong ends. They are turned from God, and placed upon those objects, the love of which he has forbidden, and they are directed to the pleasing of self, and not to the glory of God. This is the scripture character of fallen man. He has no brotherly love: and how should he have any? for he has no natural affection. He acts contrary to those very instincts by which the brutes act invariably. With all his boasted reason, and dignified faculties, he is, in social life, lower than a brute; for are there not parents who have no love for their children, and children who have no love for their parents? Is it not a common thing to find a family divided against itself, and Cain persecuting Abel unto death? And what principle of love can he have in his heart, who is thus without natural affection? Natural affection ties men together with the strongest bonds of love; but all these he breaks asunder; and therefore it is just as possible that any brotherly love should be in him, as that a fountain should send forth at the same time sweet water and bitter. But

Secondly, The natural man is not only without a principle of love, but is also described by that God who created his heart, and knows it intimately, to be actuated by a principle of hatred. Until he has some of the love of God shed abroad in his heart, he cannot have any true love for his neighbour, because he is absolutely under the influence of vicious self-love; and while this reigns in the heart, brotherly love can have no place; nay, it will be absolutely shut out, as the apostle shows, Titus iii. 3: "We ourselves also (as well as others) sometimes lived in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." When did he, as others, live in this malicious, envious, hateful state? He was, he says, a slave to these base tempers, until the kindness and love of God our Saviour was manifested to him; and therefore, until this be manifested to any man, he must be a slave to the same tempers. He cannot be delivered from them by any human means. No knowledge, no power of philosophy, no system of morality, no stretch of genius, nor refinements of polite life, can make a man less hateful in himself, or less disposed to hate others. Had not the Romans all these advantages? and yet we have this character of them drawn by an infallible pen:—They were filled with all unrighteousness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, disobedient to parents, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. Thus were they hateful, and hating one another: and such is every man before he receives the grace of Christ. He has all these evil tempers in him which the Romans had.

But some perhaps may ask, What is the cause of this universal depravity of man's affections? The corruption of his nature is the true cause: for all our evil tempers spring from the corrupt heart. The fountain is polluted, and therefore the streams run foul. Out of the heart, says our Lord, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, with the other abominable deeds of the flesh, some of which the apostle mentions by name, Gal. v. 20; such as hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, envyings. These are in every heart; for the imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil, and that continually, continually evil, because continually set against the love of God, and against that love of our neighbour which the will of God requires us to pay him. Surely, then, his heart must be changed before brotherly love can enter into it. Grace must work upon its evil tempers, and the Spirit of God must subdue them, that love and its sweet dispositions may rule in the heart. Love first taken place in us when the Spirit of God sheds it abroad and manifests to us the pardoning love of our God. Then a

new principle of love takes possession of the heart, which strives against and conquers our selfish tempers. But, until this be done by the spirit of love, there is nothing in any man but SELF. His views are all narrow and selfish. The end of all his pursuits is self-seeking, and the end of all his enjoyments is self-pleasing. This is God's own account of his fallen creature, man. And what says matter of fact? Is this man's real character? I shall endeavour to prove, under my

Third argument, that it is. Experience demonstrates it. Look around you, my brethren, and see what men are doing. Does love reign in every breast? Are they studying how to make each other happy, and rejoicing in each other's happiness? No. The contrary spirit prevails. Is there any little village free from disputes and quarrels? Where is there any large business, or manufactory, free from contention and envy among the various persons concerned in carrying it on? If they be all of one mind and of one heart, is it not generally a wicked combination to enrich themselves by oppressing others? Is there any trading city, whose merchants rejoice in the prosperity of others, as in their own? Is there any state free from parties? Blessed be God for the lessening of party-spirit among us. It has received a great blow, but it is not dead: it is only waiting for some public misfortune to give it a specious occasion of raising fresh disturbance and confusion. And look into the present melancholy state of Europe; where do you find brotherly love? Oh! where can it subsist amidst the horrors of war? It was not brotherly love which raised armies, ranged them in order of battle, put them upon action, and made brethren rejoice in the slaughter and death of each other. Brotherly love has not a more distressing sight than when it surveys a field of battle, upon which there lie ten or twenty thousand unhappy men slain in one day. These are awful proofs of the ascendency which hatred has in the human breast. It has got possession, has seized the throne, and has entirely banished all brotherly love. The fact is notorious; for men are everywhere complaining of the miseries which they meet with in social life; and they do not complain without reason. The time is come when this character is fulfilled. "Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, proud, boasters, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded." Is not this a real picture of mankind. Do we not find these unsociable tempers prevailing among them at this day? and do not these demonstrate that man is incapable of having any true love for his neighbour, until he has the love of God in his heart.

But supposing that man, in his natural state, could do some seeming acts of love to his neighbour; yet, they would avail nothing without the love of God—which is my fourth argument. Since fallen man has not the love of God in his heart by nature, nor is capable of attaining it by any means in his own power, the great business of religion is to bring him to love God, and to keep the first and great commandment, which the gospel alone can enable him to do. Moral philosophers have been trying, but they have always failed. They make religion consist in the duties of the second table, omitting the first; which is the same thing as if they laid the foundation in the air, and built the house downwards. Morality has no foundation without the love of God. All moral obligations to brotherly love fail in their motives, and in their end. Their motives are like so many ropes of sand. They have no force to bind and to oblige the conscience. We have many men who write and speak learnedly about moral duties; but here they fail; they can offer no obligation strong enough to overbalance the propensity in the sinner's heart against those duties. His heart pleads more strongly against them than they can plead for them. They may talk eloquently to him of the beauty of virtue, and may argue with him closely upon the fitness of things, and may try to persuade him by a fine chain of reasoning to act agreeably to the nature of things and to the moral sense; and they may recommend the whole from the charms of universal benevolence. All this looks very pretty in theory, and may make a fine system of the religion of nature delineated: but bring it to practice; offer these motives when self-love has some favourite passion to gratify, or self-interest has some great prospect of advantage; and what is the con-

sequence? The man is deaf to all your moral arguments: they cannot reach his heart, nor open and enlarge it to receive brotherly love, but leave it still under the power of its selfish tempers. These have too deep a root in nature to be driven out by the mere dint of moral reasoning. Grace alone can subdue them; and when grace places the love of God in the heart, then it delivers the affections from vicious self-love, and makes them act by a constant uniform principle of love to the brethren.

And as morality fails in its motives, so does it also in its end. It proposes a wrong end. The glory of God should be the end of all our actions, but moral men seek their own glory by their works; for they suppose that their works are meritorious, and can procure them the love and favour of God by way of desert. Thus they set aside faith; without which no moral works can be acceptable. Faith alone directs us to a right end, and proposes the right means to attain it; and every act and exercise of faith towards the attaining of it is well-pleasing unto God. But morality without faith cannot please God: for it is an adjudged case in scripture, "that without faith it is impossible to please him;" and it has been determined by our church, in her thirteenth article, that works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ. It is faith, working by love, which renders those works pleasant to God, that, done upon any other motive, would be highly displeasing to him.

Let these arguments suffice for the proof of the first point. It appears, from their evidence, that the love of our neighbour arises from the love of God. There is no other foundation for it. You must keep the duties of the first table before you can keep those of the second. The connexion between them is inseparable. Unless a man first has the love of God in his heart, he cannot have any true love for his neighbour. He cannot love him at all, and much less in the perfect manner here required—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And this leads me to speak of the nature and extent of the second commandment, under my second general head.

The text requires a very exalted and refined degree of brotherly love. It commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves, with the same strength, with the same constancy of affection; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it, and cherisheth it: so should he nourish and cherish his neighbour in all good things. Whatever good he wisheth to himself, the same should he wish to his neighbour; and whatever evil he would have kept off from himself, the same should he endeavour to keep off from his neighbour; and he should, in both these respects, exert himself for his neighbour as much as for himself. But who are required thus to love their neighbour? The law reaches to all men and to all cases. The same authority which enjoins the perfect love of God, enjoins also the perfect love of our neighbour. And can any fallen man keep these commandments? No; while he is in his natural state, it is impossible. We have before proved that he can neither love God nor his neighbour until his affections be changed, and vicious self-love be taken out of his heart. But when grace has made him a new creature, when his understanding is enlightened, his will is rightly disposed, and his heart is under the influence of divine love, then the text speaks to this man, and says, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The same graces which led thee to love thyself aright will operate with equal force in the love of thy neighbour, and will show itself in every work and labour of love.

It is evident, then, that the duty is of great extent. The object on whom it is to be exercised is mankind in general; for every one is our neighbour, who stands related to us in the common bonds of humanity. If he be a heathen, a Turk, or a Jew, he is nevertheless bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Nay, if he be our enemy, yet still he is our neighbour; we are of one family, and of one father; and therefore his hatred to us should not stop the current of our love to him; as our Lord has taught us in the 10th chapter of St. Luke. A certain lawyer asked him, Who is my neighbour? Jesus answered him in a parable. The Jews and the Samaritans were at such great variance, that they would not even have any dealings with one another; and a certain

man, in going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. A priest and a Levite saw their countryman in this distress, but passed by without giving him any help; and afterwards a Samaritan came to the place where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and gave him all the assistance in his power. Which now of these three, says Christ, was neighbour to him that fell among thieves? The lawyer answered, He that had mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. Go, and imitate this Samaritan. Learn of him to look upon all men, even thine enemies, as thy neighbours, and love them, and do good to them, as he did. Thus it is plain, from our Lord's explanation of the word neighbour, that we ought to extend our love to all men, and also to all cases. It is to reach to the inmost desires of the heart. The love of God, being shed abroad there, will take the command of the affections; and when love is on the throne, reigning in the heart, it will sweetly incline and mightily enable the other faculties to obey its dictates. Love will not dwell in the same heart with selfishness and hatred, but will oppose and subdue them, in order to make room for brotherly love; and when this comes and dwells in the heart, the man is thereby always disposed to think, and speak, and act, for the good of his neighbour. He has in him an abiding principle of love, which, according to what is written, "thinketh no evil." Love works first upon the thoughts of the heart, from whence all the words and actions spring. It infuses its gracious influences into the root, that the sap and juices communicated from thence may partake of its nature, and that whatever grows upon this stem may be the fruit of love. That heart-love, which thinketh no evil, will speak none; for as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, so love, being in the heart, will show itself in the tongue, and will not speak evil of its neighbour; nor can love do him any harm. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. xiii. 10; to love our neighbour as ourselves is the fulfilling of the law of the second table, which they that have the love of God in their hearts endeavour to keep, not to merit heaven; for that was the purchase of Christ's blood; but they are kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven them; and they walk in love as Christ hath also loved them.

This is the nature and extent of brotherly love. It springs from the love of God, and is guided and influenced by it. Whatever the law of God teaches a man to do for his own good, brotherly love will put him upon doing the same for the good of others, and not only of his particular friends and relations, but also of mankind, yea, of his very enemies; even for them brotherly love has its good wishes and its good offices. It would not entertain an injurious thought of its neighbour, nor speak a word to his prejudice, nor do any thing to his hurt. Its constant breathings are, As I have opportunity, I would do good unto all men. And is this, my brethren, the language of every one of your hearts? Have you a principle of brotherly love actuating and influencing every thought, and word, and work? Examine yourselves closely upon this point. It may help to show you clearly the state of your souls: for this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God loves his brother also. If your love to God be from a right motive, and to a right end, it will work in all the kind offices of brotherly love. If you fail in these, you certainly fail first in your love to God; for these are the streams which flow from the fountain, and they could not fail unless the fountain ceased to supply them. There is a want of the love to God in the heart when there is a want of any of the good offices of brotherly love in the life. Search, and see if this be not your case; and if it be, look up to God and entreat him to direct your hearts into his love, that you may hear with profit what shall be said under my

Third general head, Concerning the scripture method of enabling us to keep this commandment. Man has no generous principle in him by nature. Vicious self-love directs and governs all his views and actions, and therefore he must be changed and renewed in the spirit of his mind, before brotherly love can have any place in his heart. The scripture treats largely of this great change, and ascribes the whole of it to the Spirit of God. He enlightens the understand-

ing, and convinces the sinner of his guilt and of his danger! Then he attacks the stubborn self-will, and makes the sinner feel that if he follow his own will he must unavoidably perish, and that everlastingly: and he also shows him the horrid rebellion of his heart, whose affections are all apostates from God, having set up the creature, and served it in the place of the Creator. The sinner becomes deeply sensible of his guilt and of his misery, and is made earnestly to wish and to pray for deliverance: and when the Lord has thoroughly humbled him, and by various ways and means has convinced him of his own utter helplessness, then he enables him to believe to the saving of his soul. He finds himself at peace with God through the righteousness of the Lord Christ, on which he can rely for his acceptance and pardon; and therefore he loves God, who has first so exceedingly loved him; and he proves, by his unfeigned love to the brethren, that this love of God is in his heart: for, being there, it will produce the kind dispositions, and will draw forth the good offices, of brotherly love. In this way grace overcomes the selfishness of nature, and anger, wrath, malice, hatred, and the other unsociable tempers of the old man are subdued, and the new man puts on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering. These are sanctified affections in him, because they are the genuine fruits of that faith which worketh by love.

This is the scripture method of attaining brotherly love. It cannot be attained but by the grace of God: for the established rule is—"Ye are taught of God to love one another." It is not from human, but from divine teaching. Brotherly love is not learned in the schools of moral philosophy. The greatest professors of ethics may write pretty systems, and read lectures upon them to their pupils, and perhaps they may explain to them something of brotherly love; but they can place none of it in the heart. Christ alone can do that. He is the great teacher of brotherly love; and it is in his school only where men can learn it practically. He teaches his disciples first the want of it; and when he gives them his love, and sheds it abroad in their hearts, then also he gives them the love of the brethren, as it is written, 1 John iv. 7: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God;" he is a child of God, because he loveth his heavenly Father, and loveth all his Father's children: which doctrine the same apostle maintains in these words, 1 John v. 1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." Here the apostle discovers the true cause from which arises our love to God and to man. It is through faith, apprehending and laying hold of Christ, that we are made the children of God, and therefore we love the Father of whom we are begotten, and the brethren who are begotten of him, and who have obtained like precious faith with us. Believers, who are thus born again of God, and adopted into his family, are closely connected and joined together in the bonds of love. Love, flowing from the head into all the members, unites them in affection to their heavenly Father and in affection to all his children; for, being members of the same body, they have the same care one for another; and if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

It is certain, then, from these scriptures, that no man can love his neighbour as himself, unless he be taught it of God. There is something called universal benevolence, and the moral sense, and the patriot spirit, which pretend to teach brotherly love upon the principles of moral philosophy; but these are false, bastard kinds of love, arising from selfish motives, and directed to selfish ends. And let them appear ever so refined and exalted, yet they are not sanctified affections, because they spring not from faith in Jesus Christ; and without faith in him it is impossible to please God. Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God. You may do many seeming acts of love; you may be the foremost in all charitable subscriptions; you may be very kind to your needy relations, and very good to the poor; nay, you may build hospitals, and leave your estate to endow them; yet, if these things be not done in faith, they have in them the nature of sin, and are not acts of brotherly love, but acts of your own proud, selfish spirit. God looks

at your heart. He sees upon what principle you are working; and if your principle be wrong, your actions cannot be pleasing in his sight. Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good; but a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. This is the main point, with respect to brotherly love; and this comes to be considered in the

Fourth place, Under the practical observations upon the doctrine of the text. The doctrine is this: Whoever keeps the first table, will keep the second. If the love of God be in his heart, he will give proof and evidence of it by his unfeigned love of his neighbour, and he will love him as himself, not with that vicious self-love which influences the views and actions of all natural men, but with that holy, sanctified affection, which springs from, and is guided by, the love of God. If this brotherly love were in every heart, it would turn the world into a paradise. If all men had true heart-love to their neighbour, earth would be heaven: for, so much love as there is on earth, so much of heaven is brought down upon it. The hateful and selfish tempers of mankind make the world what it is: these are the cause of all the miseries in society, and these are in all men by nature. Their love centres in self, and seeks not another's good, but its own. One great design of Christianity was to reform their love, by giving them that faith which worketh by love, by love to God for his inestimable mercies, and by love to men for the sake of God; by which means the old, selfish heart becomes a loving heart, and is ever prepared to do all the good it can to the bodies and souls of men. This is the true character of a Christian. He wishes well to all men, speaks evil of no man, and is ready to every good work. In thought, word, and deed, he is influenced by unfeigned love to his neighbour, whether he be a stranger, a friend, or an enemy. Is this your character, my brethren? Have you the true love of your neighbour in your hearts? and are you constantly manifesting it in your lives? How many persons have we among us, that make great professions of brotherly love, even of universal benevolence, and yet they divide the two tables, and make religion consist in keeping the duties of the second. All our moralists act upon this plan. They speak and write very prettily about moral duties; but they lay the foundation of them upon sand. They neither build them upon the love of God, nor upon faith in Christ Jesus; and other foundation can no man lay for the love of God, nor upon the grace of the Holy Spirit disposing and enabling them to love God, and then to love their neighbour. Thus these men put asunder what God hath joined together. The love of God and the love of men cannot be separated: for there can be no true, brotherly love, but what springs from the love of God. Let it spring from any other cause, there will be something in it selfish; it will arise from private, narrow views, and will be directed to mean ends; and be it ever so refined and patriot-spirited, yet it will be unsanctified; because, whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. Without faith the sinner is under guilt, and under sentence of death, and is as incapable of doing a single act which is good and valid in the court of heaven as a condemned criminal is of doing any legal act which would be allowed to be valid in a court of justice. The law of God has attainted him of high treason, and found him guilty; upon which justice has a right to inflict the deserved punishment, and to put the sentence of the law in force against him; but if he own the sentence to be just, and sue for mercy, and seek it through Jesus Christ, relying on his grace and righteousness, then by faith he is pardoned; his attainder is reversed, and he is capable of doing acts well-pleasing unto God, through Jesus Christ his Lord. The moral works done by such a person are acceptable, because his person was first accepted, and he was what they call *rectus in curia;* but without faith it was impossible that his moral works should please God: "for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin."

But I need not enlarge upon this point. Perhaps there may be none of those persons here. By our presence we declare ourselves to be professors of Christianity, and as such we are nearly concerned in what has been now said. The scripture has drawn our character before we receive the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, and has painted in very expressive colours the inward lineaments of our hearts. It not only describes every fallen man to be without any

true love of God or of his neighbour, but also represents him to be at enmity with God, and to be under the power of corrupt inclinations, which are opposite to God's will, and of selfish views, which are destructive of brotherly love. But while the scripture thus describes our malady, it offers us a remedy, which faith receives, and then works by love to God and to man; by love to God in loving him and his will, and by unfeigned love to the brethren, showing itself in every good word and work. There are great complaints in the world of the want of this brotherly love; and indeed there is very little of it to be found anywhere. But what is the reason? Is it not because there is a great want of the love of God? For since brotherly love springs from this, as from its only fountain, how can there be love abundant in the streams, if it fail in the fountain? If love does not operate in your life, how can love be in your heart? And if it be not there, what are you? not a Christian. What the sun would be without light, such is a Christian without love. He has none of the life and spirit of Christ, and wants the very mark and badge of Christ's disciples. "By this (says he) shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." O Lord, where are thy disciples at present? Hast thou not said, Ye shall know them by their love to one another? But upon whom is this mark found? Upon all nominal Christians? No; they are distinguished by a contrary temper. But is it not among professors? What professors? We have professors of so many denominations, and of so many different parties, that it is hard to say who has the narrowest views, or the most party spirit; but it is easy to see, at first sight, that brotherly love is the peculiar character of few of them. Alas! alas! they have lost their proper mark by which they were to be known to be Christ's disciples; and thus the scripture is fulfilled, which saith, "In the latter days the love of many shall wax cold." It is cold, indeed, with many; thank God, not with all. There are some (although but few), perhaps, of every denomination, who still have unfeigned love for the brethren. May the God of love increase their numbers.

Since there is so little brotherly love in the world, let each of you, my brethren, examine yourselves, and see whether you be Christ's disciples more than in name and profession. Are you known to belong to the household of faith by your love to one another? Do you love your neighbour as yourself, with a well-regulated, holy love, arising from a right motive, and directed to a right end? If you think you have this love, how did you attain it? Were you taught it of God? Have you been humbled before him under a sense of your guilt, and have you felt the misery of being enslaved to your own wicked and selfish tempers? And did you apply to Christ for deliverance? Did he take guilt out of your conscience, and give you that faith which worketh by love to your reconciled Father, and by love to your brethren for his sake? If you have been thus taught of God, you will also be enabled of God to love one another. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more.

But if this be not your experience, then you cannot have the true brotherly love; and without it, what are you? You are not a Christian; for this commandment have we from Christ, that he who loveth God, love his brother also. Your want of love to your brother demonstrates your want of love to God: and consider what state you are in while you are not reconciled to God, nor at peace with him. You are under the guilt of all your sins, and liable to suffer the deserved punishment of them. That God, whom you daily provoke, daily spares you. He might get himself glory in punishing such a rebel; but his long-suffering bears with you: and what return do you make him for keeping you out of hell? Do you love him, and serve him with grateful obedience? No, you attack him with open, avowed rebellion, as if you had an arm like God, and was not afraid of the fire of his wrath: and you carry on your war against him by declared war against your neighbours, indulging the malicious, envious tempers, and gratifying the unjust desires of your own selfish heart. Suppose God should call you to his bar while you are in this state! As you have no love for him, you could have no happiness in beholding or enjoying him; and as you have no love for his family, you could not be happy in their company. You hated them upon earth; and, they are so much unlike yourself, you would hate them in

heaven. What, then, could you meet with at his bar, but what you are prepared to receive, even an eternal separation from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power? And can you think of this without concern? Have you no fear lest the wrath of God should abide upon you for ever and ever? What! have you not one wish to flee from the wrath to come? Oh dreadful state of hardened sinners! May the Lord take pity on you, and subdue your rebellious hearts by his almighty grace, that you may be brought to the right love of God, and of your neighbour.

Perhaps, some of you may say, I thank God I am not in this state. I have been made to see and to feel my enmity against God and against man; and I heartily desire to love both. You have reason, indeed, to be thankful; for this desire is a sign and token of God's love to you. Wait upon him, that you may know and experience his love. He has encouraged you to ask this grace of him, and has promised to give it, upon your asking. It is his gift; for God is love; and he is more willing to give than you are to ask. It is one of his choice gifts, which he delights to bestow upon the children of men, and with the right use of which he is well pleased. "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well," James ii. 8. Ye do well in presenting this odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto God. Oh! wait then upon him, and be found in the ways of his appointment, not to merit his love; it is a free gift, and it is inestimable; the price of it is above all the riches of earth and heaven, but wait humbly for the time of his love; and when, out of his sovereign grace, he sheds it abroad in your heart, then he will enable you to love your neighbour as yourself. Surely these blessings are worth your waiting for; especially since you are encouraged by those comfortable words, the truth of which many thousands now alive have found by happy experience: "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me, saith the Lord." Isa. xlix. 23.

Thanks be to his rich and free love, which has fulfilled this scripture to so many in our days. You, my brethren, who know the love of God, should remember, that as you love him who begat, so you ought to love them who are begotten of him. The soundness of your love to God should be made evident from your acts of love to your fellow-creatures; for that faith, which brings you to the knowledge of God's love to your soul, should work by love to them; and this work of love proves it—does not make it—but proves it to be a living faith. While it lives, it loves. Love is the very breath of faith; and while love breathes in the believer, it disposes him to do all the good he can to the bodies and to the souls of his neighbours; for his is heart-love. He cannot see any one sick, poor, in prison, naked, or wounded, but love hastens to his relief. It does not say, Be ye well; be ye relieved, &c.; but it freely gives them such things as they have need of. My Christian brethren, you know that these are the proper offices of brotherly love. Oh! be careful then in the practice of them. If you would have your evidences kept clear for heaven, and your peace and comfort abiding, let your faith be continually working. Exercise it upon Christ's distressed members. Go about doing them good. Refuse no labour of love; for he has commanded, and he has encouraged you to embrace every opportunity. This is the commandment of God—that you should believe on the name of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave you commandment: and the day is approaching, when you will hear him say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Keep your faith, then, working by love; for they cannot be separated. Faith is the root, and love is the fruit: if the root be alive, it will bear fruit, even the abundant fruits of love and charity, to God's glory, and to man's profit.

And as the believer is kindly affectioned with brotherly love to relieve the bodily wants of his neighbour, so is he influenced towards his spiritual wants with more affection, because the soul is more precious than the body; at least, if he be not, he ought, however, to be thus influenced. There is in men a strange remissness and backwardness to the performance of the offices of love, relating to the souls of their neighbours; but grace makes them willing and able: it sweetly inclines and mightily enables them to the spiritual acts of brotherly love; but one cannot

help lamenting how little grace is exercised this way. While worldly people are erecting magnificent hospitals, and doing princely acts of charity, oh! how short of them do professors come in their works of charity? You are a professor; you call yourself a Christian; and do you not know one of your neighbours who lives in open sin, and yet you never speak to him of it? You thought, indeed, sometimes of reproving him; but then, fear, or shame, or indolence prevented you. These passions were stronger in you than brotherly love. And does not this convince you how unlike you are to your blessed master? Did he ever decline doing good for fear of some little inconvenience which might attend it? No, he went about doing good, although at the hazard of his life; and yet your love to Christ, and to precious souls, is so very cold, that you can suffer your neighbour to live in sin, yea, perhaps to die in it, without one kind reproof. And hast thou not, then, boasting professor, great reason to examine thyself, whether thou be in the faith? for how canst thou prove it to be true and alive, since it does not work by love? May this humble thee, and put thee upon seeking more of the spirit and power of Jesus Christ. Perhaps you are the master of a family: how do you show your love to your servants? You see they do your work, and you take care to pay them their wages: and what more do you than publicans and sinners? But do you watch over their souls, instructing and admonishing them with all gentleness and diligence? Have you any family worship? Do you pray constantly with them, and for them? so that the Lord may justly say of you, as he did of the father of the faithful, "I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." God knows, there are few heads of families who take any care at all of the souls of their servants; and few indeed do their duty by them in brotherly love. The Lord pardon what is past, and reform us for the future in this respect. Perhaps you may be a parent, and you take pains enough to provide for the temporal welfare of your children: you rise up early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, that you may get a great fortune for them: and what more do you for them than for your beasts? You provide for your children's well-being in the world: and do you not the same for your cattle? Christian love would put you upon another work, and would stir you up to catechize them, to teach them to know themselves, to become early acquainted with their corrupt and sinful nature, and to see the necessity of their salvation by Jesus Christ. This is your bounden duty as a parent. The blessing upon the discharge of it is in God's hand; but he requires you to use the means; and if love be alive and active in your heart, you will strive more to have your children rich in grace, than rich in those things which perish in the using. In whatever other station of life God has placed you, do you perform the offices of brotherly love in it? Do you love your neighbour as yourself? Search diligently, and watch your heart narrowly. If you have any true love, pray for more of it; and may the Lord God Almighty help you to subdue self, and all your selfish tempers, that love may increase and abound in your soul. May you grow up unto him in all things, who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Hear us, thou God of love, and answer; and grant that all men may know us to be thy disciples by our edifying one another in love. May no selfish temper, no bigotry or party spirit, hinder us from relieving the spiritual or bodily wants of any of our distressed brethren; but unite all thy members closely among themselves. Make us, Lord, of one mind and of one heart; and may all that love thee in sincerity think and speak the same things. O give us that love which never faileth. We ask it for thy mercy's sake, to the honour of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons in one Jehovah, whose is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE X.

UPON THE CLEANSING VIRTUE OF CHRIST'S BLOOD.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.—Zech. xiii. 1.

THEY that be whole need not a physician; but the sick stand in need of his advice and help. The persons who feel no malady of sin, see not their want of a saviour. They are not in pain, and therefore they desire no remedy; but it is otherwise with the convinced sinner. He feels the misery of sin. He suffers the torment of it in his guilty conscience, and earnestly seeks for relief. No person in exquisite pain ever cried out for help with greater fervency than he does. He has heard of the almighty physician, and of his great readiness to heal all distressed objects who come unto him; and therefore he earnestly implores his assistance. How comfortable to his afflicted soul is such a scripture as this, when explained and applied to him by the Spirit of God: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." He hears the words with joy, and blesses God for having opened a fountain for such polluted sinners as he is, to wash in and be clean. He believes the record that God gave of his Son, namely, that his blood cleanseth from all sin; and through faith he finds great joy and peace in receiving redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins. But the case is quite different with those who have never been in any concern about their souls. They may give a kind of simple assent to such scriptures as this. Perhaps they may be convinced that they shall want to be cleansed from sin some time or other; but at present they see no absolute necessity for it. They have no painful sense of the malady of sin, nor any apprehension of their danger; and therefore they give themselves no uneasiness about the great Physician of souls. But the less they are concerned for themselves, the more ought we, who are sensible of their danger, to be concerned for them. We ought to preach the law to them, by which is the knowledge of sin, and to set before them their pollution and their guilt, and the misery and punishment to which they are subject; and we ought to look up to God for his blessing, that he would set home and apply by his grace to their consciences, what we speak to the outward ear. And when he has convinced them of the dangerous state in which they live, before they are washed in the fountain of Christ's blood, and they earnestly desire and pray to be washed in it, then we may safely preach to them the comforts of the gospe., and the infinite riches of a Saviour's love; then we may exhort them to wash and be clean; though their sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, when washed in the fountain of the Redeemer's blood: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. May the Lord God, who opened this fountain, be with us this day to apply its cleansing, healing virtue. May his good Spirit awaken the careless and profane sinner to see his pollution and guilt! may he increase the desires and strengthen the longings of those who are waiting for the blood of sprinkling! and may he edify and comfort his own people by means of what shall be said, in order to determine

First, What the fountain is, which is mentioned in the text.

Secondly, The time when it was opened; here said to be a particular day.

Thirdly, The wonderful property of this fountain—it could cleanse and do away the pollution of sins of the deepest dye; and then,

Fourthly, By what means and in what way sinners receive and partake of its cleansing property.

It will not require many words to determine what the fountain is. There is a circumstance mentioned in the text, which will easily settle this point. It is said to be opened for sin and for uncleanness. Now, what fountain could it be which

had the wonderful property of cleansing from sin? The scripture has laid down this infallible rule: without shedding of blood there is no remission: and the shedding of what blood ever obtained remission? Did the blood of the sacrifices under the law? No. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats," Isaiah i. 11. "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings," Hos. vi. 6. He commanded sacrifice, but not in preference to mercy. Men were not to rest in the sacrifice, as if its blood could atone, but to look with faith at the great sacrifice which the mercy of God had provided, and which was to make a full atonement for sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. This was the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. No blood but his ever did or could atone. If all the cattle upon a thousand hills had been offered up, they could not have taken away the least sin. If a man had given the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul, still his sin would have remained. If he had repented, his repentance without faith in the blood of Christ could not have obtained remission. There would be occasion to repent of his repentance. If he were to shed rivers of tears, yea, tears of blood, these very tears would want washing. Nothing can cleanse and do away sin but some divine and infinitely precious blood; and in whom is there any such? Not in a mere creature. A creature has blood; but none that has any virtue to cleanse a sinner from the pollution and guilt of sin. This is the property of the Lamb of God, who, being both God and man in the person of one Christ, did thereby give a divine and infinite virtue to the blood which he shed, so that it can cleanse from all sin. Here, then, is the fountain. It is the most precious blood of Christ, which is always sending out its virtue, as a fountain is always sending out water. Its cleansing streams have never stopped, since there was sin to cleanse; and they can never be exhausted. Whoever washes therein shall be made clean, let him have been ever so defiled or polluted. The pool of Bethesda was a lively image of the fountain. After the angel went down and troubled the water, then whosoever first stept in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. As this cured every bodily, so does the blood of Christ cure every spiritual disease; for it takes away sin, which is the cause of all diseases, and obtains eternal redemption.

Are any of you, my brethren, thoroughly sensible of the defiling nature of sin? and do you find how offensive it makes you in the eyes of a holy God? Has the angel of the covenant come down and troubled your consciences? and are you convinced that nothing can cleanse you but the blood of Jesus Christ? Then believe his word and rely upon his promise, that if your polluted souls be washed in this fountain, how filthy and defiled soever they be, they shall be made clean: for it can cleanse from all sin. Are your pollutions numerous, of a long continuance, and of the deepest dye? The blood of Christ can infallibly cleanse them and make them as white as snow; because it partakes of the infinite and divine nature of the God-man Christ Jesus. He who opened this fountain for sin, was God and man united in one Christ, whereby the actions of the one nature may properly be ascribed to and predicated of the other. The man Jesus had blood to shed; but he who shed it was God as well as man; and therefore it is called by St. Paul "the blood of God:" for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. The manhood suffered and bled; the Godhead merited infinitely by those sufferings and by that blood-shedding, and so the one Christ, who suffered and bled, merited infinitely, according to what the apostle John says, "That God laid down his life for us;" and the ends and purposes for which God laid it down could not possibly be defeated. Hear this, ye poor guilty sinners, whose consciences are troubled with a sense of your many and great pollutions. The Lord God has opened a fountain for such as you are, to wash in and be clean; and he has given to it a divine and almighty virtue to cleanse all manner of sins. His power is present, to make it an all-perfect cleanser. Oh that God may enable you to make use of it! Is it not your heart's desire that you may be made clean? And here are the means. The fountain stands open. What hinders you then from washing in it, and having your con-

sciences purged from dead works? You cannot doubt of its virtue. Has it not cleansed sinners who were once as black as hell?—a Manasseh, a Mary Magdalen, a Saul? Put it then to the trial. Believe the record which God has given of it. Apply it for the cleansing of your souls, and it will infallibly take effect. All the sinners, from Adam to Christ, who have been admitted into the presence and kingdom of God, were cleansed from every spot and stain of sin in this fountain; and all the sinners, from Christ to the end of the world, must wash their robes in the same fountain, if they appear in spotless purity before God. But although this fountain has had its all-cleansing virtue ever since the fall, yet there was a fixed time in the council of God, called in the text, in that day, when the immaculate Lamb of God should come into the world, and shed his blood, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and this brings me to my

Second head,—Under which I purposed to consider the time when this fountain was opened, here said to be a particular day. And this was certainly the day when the Redeemer suffered and bled upon the cross, which being fixed and unalterable in the decrees of the most high God, they who lived before Christ gave himself an offering for sin, were saved by faith in him, as we are since he was offered; for the merits of his sacrifice looked backwards as well as forward, and, like as the sun sends out light in every direction, so did the efficacy of our Lord's sacrifice. It communicated its cleansing qualities, as well to those who bled before, as to those who lived since, Christ made his soul an offering for sin. But nevertheless there was a day, a precise determinate time, for his offering. Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, slain typically in every sacrifice; but in the fulness of time he came, and was really slain, and the day of his sufferings was the day when the fountain for sin and for uncleanness was opened, which is clearly determined by the context; for in the foregoing chapter the prophet is speaking of an extraordinary morning in the land of Israel, and he introduces his description with these words: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced." These words are applied by an infallible expositor to our Lord's being pierced upon the cross: for St. John says, "When the soldiers came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs; but one of them, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came out blood and water:" for these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled: "A bone of him shall not be broken." And again another scripture saith, "They shall look on him, whom they have pierced." From hence it is evident that the fountain was opened on the day of Christ's sufferings, here pointed out by this distinguishing mark; namely, the soldiers' piercing his side, from whence there flowed blood and water. When this fixed day was come, and Christ had suffered whatever the hand and counsel of God had determined before should be done to him, then his blood had an all-cleansing virtue. What he once shed was for ever meritorious. It was so absolutely perfect, that he need not shed it any more. The sacrifice of that one day was sufficient to satisfy all the demands of law and justice; "so that Christ need not offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Once, the just suffered for the unjust, and the blood which he shed on that day had such an infinite cleansing virtue as to make scarlet, crimson sins as white as snow. The ends for which he bled could not possibly be defeated; for he was God and man united in one Christ; and the one Christ merited infinitely by the shedding of his most precious blood; and it was indeed shed as abundantly as if it had flowed from a fountain. From the time that his agony and bloody sweat began in the garden, until he expired upon the cross, he was a bleeding victim, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. When he was buffeted and scourged; when he was crowned with thorns, and their sharp points were stuck into his head by the barbarous soldiers; when the cross was

laid upon him, and the weight of it opened his wounds and made them bleed afresh; when the nails went through his hands and feet, and he hung for six hours bleeding upon the cross; then was the most precious blood shed, which is the only fountain to wash away sin and uncleanness. Sinners, consider the great need you have of this fountain, and the inestimable love of Christ, who opened it for such as you are. He calls upon you, he entreats you to view him, as he hung bleeding upon the cross in his bitter passion—"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." This is his earnest request to you who are passing by and minding other things. He would have you to stop, to lay aside all other concerns, and to employ your thoughts upon his unparalleled sufferings. Oh, hearken then unto him! Look upon this man of sorrows. View him tormented, bleeding, dying, and then ask your heart, Why does the innocent Lamb of God thus suffer? Was it not that there might be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness? And how, then, are you affected with the shedding of that blood, which can cleanse from all sin? If grace be stirring in your hearts, you will mourn with a godly sorrow for your sins which occasioned his bitter sufferings, as it is written in the chapter before the text:—"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." As tender parents are affected with the death of an only son and of a first-born, so shall the holy mourners in Sion be affected with the wounding and piercing of Christ. They shall be in bitterness, not only for his death, but for the cause of it. Their sins were the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God; and it is their constant language—"My sins pierced Christ with a thousand sorrows in the day of his suffering, while he was wounded for my transgressions and bruised for mine iniquities; and yet—vile, ungrateful wretch that I am—daily am I piercing him with my sins, and making his wounds bleed afresh." Whoever can speak these words feelingly, will mourn after a godly sort, and will know how to value that precious blood which has merit and efficacy to save him from his base ingratitude, as well as from his other sins. He will look upon every one of our Lord's wounds as a fountain opened for the purifying of sin and of uncleanness; for every sin is of a polluting nature, and wants cleansing. Nothing can be so loathsome in the eyes of a holy God as sin. A leper covered over with sores, and ulcers, is not more offensive in our sight, than he that is defiled with the leprosy of sin is in the sight of God. He is not only of purer eyes than to behold it, but he also rejects the sinner for it, as filthy and abominable altogether; and he will be rejected for ever, unless he be convinced of the defiling nature of sin, and desire to be cleansed from its pollution. When these desires come from the Holy Spirit, he will strengthen them, until the sinner, being justified by the blood of Christ, be made clean and righteous altogether. But this point comes more particularly to be treated of in the

Third place, Under the consideration of the wonderful property of the fountain mentioned in the text, it could cleanse and take away the pollution of sins of the deepest dye. The fountain is the blood of Jesus Christ, which is able to cleanse from sin by the divine ordinance and appointment. The ever-blessed Trinity have given it an almighty power in order to its answering all the purposes of cleansing; and therefore it is called by the apostle "the blood of the everlasting covenant," because the eternal Three entered into a covenant, and by an eternal purpose decreed to bring many sons unto glory through the obedience and blood-shedding of Jesus Christ. He being a person in the Godhead coequal and coeternal with the Father, undertook, as their representative, to obey the law for them, and to suffer the penalties, to shed the blood, and to die the death which they deserved, and thus to satisfy all the demands which his Father's justice had upon them. The Father accepted him as their substitute, and was well-pleased with them for his sake, even before he came in the flesh; and when he did come in the fulness of time to put away sin by the infinitely perfect sacrifice

of himself, and when he said upon the cross, "It is finished," then the blood of the everlasting covenant made a full and perfect atonement for their sins. Of this there can be no doubt, because he rose from the grave in a public character, as the first fruit of the dead, and because he afterwards ascended up on high to give gifts unto men, and, according to his most true promise, he gave his royal gifts, even to the rebellious. He sent them the Holy Ghost the comforter, whose office in the covenant it was to awaken sinners, dead asleep in sin, to convince them of their guilt and danger, and to bring them to the blood of sprinkling to be made clean. When the Holy Spirit thus graciously stirs up and disposes them to be cleansed in the fountain, which was opened for sin and for uncleanness, why should not they instantly make use of it? The fountain can cleanse them. It is almighty to cleanse from all sin. The holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity have covenanted to give an infinitely purifying virtue to it. Although Jesus alone shed his blood, yet the Father covenanted to accept it, and the Holy Spirit covenanted to apply it and to make it effectual to the sinner's heart; so that the whole Trinity have appointed it to be an infallible cleanser. And let troubled consciences remember, that the divine virtue and almighty power of the Godhead will now work with the blood of the everlasting covenant to make it effectual for every end and purpose for which it was shed; yea, even the Father's justice, from which they had most to fear, is as much bound to save those who seek to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, as his mercy; for infinite justice has been satisfied with the shedding of this blood. All its demands have been fully answered, and justice and mercy are now alike engaged to receive those sinners who come to Jesus to be made clean. Think of this, thou afflicted soul, tossed with doubts and fears, and not comforted. Why cannot that blood satisfy thy conscience, which has satisfied the infinite justice of God? The Lord deliver thee from unbelief, and help thee to rely upon the blood of the everlasting covenant, until thou find every thing that is said of it in scripture to be infallibly true by thine own experience.

The wonderful property, then, of this fountain comes from hence, that there is in it the most precious blood of Christ, which has a divine virtue and power to cleanse, as the whole scripture bears testimony. Under the ceremonial dispensation, whenever any person had broken the law, he was pronounced unclean, and was shut out of the camp, until he was cleansed by blood. He was to bring his sacrifice to the priest, who was to slay it, and then to sprinkle the blood of it upon the unclean, that he might be sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. Thus the Mosaic ceremonies, which were figures of good things to come, then taught the sinner, that as his sin shut him out of the congregation of the Lord's people below, so would it shut him out of the congregation above, into which nothing unclean can enter; and then they further taught him the infinite efficacy of Christ's blood to do away sin; for if the blood of the sacrifices could cleanse outwardly, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself, without spot, to God, purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God

Thus the ceremonial law showed that blood could cleanse, and referred the sinner to the blood of the Lamb of God, by faith in which he might be made clean. The New Testament refers him to the same fountain, and has given such descriptions of it, as ought to silence doubts and fears, and to enable every convinced sinner to rely upon its virtue, and to wash and be clean. All that Jesus has purchased; all that the Holy Spirit has to apply; all the graces of time, and all the blessings of eternity, are ascribed to the merit of his most precious blood-shedding. Thus the scriptures set forth its inestimable value. By it the price of our redemption was paid. The debt was so immense, for which justice had seized upon our persons and estates, that we could not be redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. The blood alone of that God-man was sufficient to pay our ransom, and he paid it to the utmost farthing, as these scriptures testify: "In whom we have redemption through his blood," Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14. And as the redeemed of the Lord could thus say by faith, "we have redemption through his blood;" so we read, in Rev. v. that the redeemed of the Lord in heaven sang

a new song, when the sealed book was given to the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, who alone prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Through his blood also we have remission and forgiveness of sins. Without shedding of blood there is no remission, and no blood could merit remission but his, as he says himself: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins," Matt. xxvi. 28. And the apostle, speaking of himself and of the Colossians, says, by it they had remission: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Col. i. 14. And the apostle John thus praises Christ for this blessing: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6. And as believers have redemption and remission of sins through the most precious blood of Christ, so have they also through it another inestimable privilege, even free justification, according to what is written, Rom. v. 8, 9. "While we were yet enemies, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." And we are thus justified and saved through faith in his blood;—for "we are justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 24, 25. And being thus justified by faith in his blood, we have another privilege, greater than the world can give, and such as the world cannot take away, even peace with God: "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ: for he is our peace," Eph. ii. 13, 14. He was constituted and appointed by the covenant the Prince of peace, who was to reconcile God and man: "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Col. i. 19, 20. And when the sinner is reconciled to the Father by faith in the blood of his Son, then the sense of this peace will enable him to rejoice in God, through Jesus Christ his Lord, by whom he hath now received the atonement. And when he is thus redeemed, and his sins are forgiven, and person justified, and the peace of God rules in his heart, then there is another blessed privilege received by the blood of Christ, even sanctification. "The bodies of those beasts," says the apostle, "whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp: wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate," Heb. xiii. 11, 12. His people are delivered from the dominion as well as from the guilt of sin by the merit of his blood: for he "gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. He gave himself to death for them, that he might redeem them from the power of iniquity, as well as from the guilt and punishment of it, as the apostle witnesses, Col. i. 21, 22: "And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight." And when believers are thus, through obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, renewed day by day in the spirits of their minds, then they have another exceeding great and precious privilege, namely, liberty of approaching God, and access with confidence unto him, as their reconciled Father. Their happiness in this respect is greater than can be expressed. They can cast all their care upon him, and thereby ease themselves of the burden, and they can lay all their wants and complaints before him, knowing that their God will supply all their wants out of the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. And this inestimable privilege comes to them through the blood of Christ, as the apostle has proved, Heb. x. 19, 20, &c.: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

These are some of the privileges which believers receive from the most precious blood-shedding of Jesus Christ: and are not these sufficient to demonstrate the infinitely cleansing virtue of the fountain of his blood? For by it they are washed from every pollution and defilement of sin, and are presented without spot or blemish before God. Did sin bring them into captivity? The blood of Christ redeems them from all their enemies, who led them captive—from sin and Satan, from death and hell. Did sin bring guilt into the conscience? The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus takes it out, and speaks pardon and forgiveness. Did sin make us unrighteous, and condemn us at God's bar? There is now no condemnation to them, who are justified by the blood of Christ. Did sin provoke a holy God, and arm his justice to execute the pains and penalties of the broken law upon the transgressors? Christ has made peace by the blood of the cross, and he gives them peace in their consciences, when they are justified by faith. Are we by nature sold under sin, and under its power and dominion? The blood of Christ has merit and efficacy in it to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. Did sin shut the door of mercy against us, so that God would receive none of our prayers or services? The blood of Christ has opened a new and living way, and believers may with boldness enter into the holiest with their petitions; for whatever they ask of the Father in his Son's name, he will give it them. Thus the blood of Christ saves from all iniquity. Whatever pollution or guilt iniquity had brought upon the soul, all is done away in the fountain of his blood. And these scriptures have so particularly described its virtue, that convinced sinners might have strong encouragement to rely upon its power to cleanse from all sin: for the Lord God has appointed it for this purpose, and it cannot fail of answering it, because he is almighty to render his own appointment effectual. The blood of Christ cleanses by a divine virtue, which nothing can resist. God has engaged and promised that his almighty power shall work in the application of this blood, and that not only in the present life, but also in the next. He has given to it an infinite and eternal virtue. It can cleanse for ever. Oh! doubt not then of any lesser virtue ascribed to it in scripture, since it has the greatest that possibly can be. Surely it can cleanse in time, since it can cleanse to eternity. "Christ by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Heb. ix. 12. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. And when the beloved apostle saw in a vision the great multitude, whom no man could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and one of the elders asked him, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," Rev. vii. 13, 14. These precious robes, in which they appear before God, and stand confirmed for ever and ever in bliss, were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; and this gives them an eternal purity and endless glory.

Has not the fountain, then, which was opened for sin and for uncleanness, a divine property, since believers receive from it all the blessings of time and all the blessings of eternity? The scriptures which I have quoted ascribe to it the wonderful power of cleansing from all sin, and that for ever. Sins of the greatest guilt, scarlet, crimson sins, whose deep dye cannot be taken out by any other means, washed in the blood of the Lamb, become as white as snow: and the fountain which has this infinite virtue stands open, night and day. It cleanses freely, without money and without price. Whosoever will, let him come and be made clean. The Spirit and the bride invite him, and say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that desires to be cleansed, come. Come, and try its virtue, and it will infallibly succeed. Though thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand sinners have washed in it, and been made clean, yet it has lost none of its virtue. Still it is almighty to do away sin. Whosoever is washed in the blood of Christ, is made clean and pure to all eternity. My brethren, do you believe this? And do you desire to experience its cleansing virtue? Have you been convinced of the polluting nature of sin, and how it has defiled your souls, and rendered them in the sight of a holy God more filthy and abominable

than the most loathsome object is in our eyes? and would you be made clean freely by the blood of the Lamb of God? Is this the prayer of your heart? "I am convinced that God is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity, and I am nothing but iniquity." "Oh! that the Lamb of God would take pity on me, and out of his mere love and mercy cleanse my polluted soul from every spot and stain of sin. I believe nothing else can cleanse me but his most precious blood; and it cannot cleanse unless it be applied and received by faith. Lord, apply it then for thy mercy's sake, and wash my soul in the fountain which was opened for sin and for uncleanness." If these be your real desires, you will follow me, profitably, to the consideration of the

Fourth particular I was to treat of; namely, By what means and in what way sinners receive and partake of its cleansing property. Although Christ has shed his blood, and although it can cleanse from all sin; yet it cannot cleanse unless it be applied. You can have no benefit from it unless it be sprinkled upon your consciences. By the shedding of it he obtained merit to cleanse; but the efficacy of it in cleansing comes from the application. The law pointed out this in the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices, and particularly in the cleansing of the leper. When the priest had examined him, and found the plague of the leprosy was healed, then the leper was to bring his sacrifice, and it was offered for him, and its blood was shed; but he was not pronounced legally clean until the blood was sprinkled upon him. The shedding of the blood did not cleanse without the application. And these figures of the law are applied to Christ in the New Testament. The apostle Paul speaks of the sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience; and the apostle Peter shows what it is which is able thus to cleanse the heart; namely, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. This speaketh better things than that of Abel. Abel's blood cried for vengeance; but Christ's blood cries for mercy; and when it is applied, it sprinkles the heart from an evil conscience, and purges it from dead works to serve the living God.

This consideratiou brings us to meditate upon the offices of the Holy Spirit. As Christ covenanted to shed his blood, so the Holy Spirit covenanted to apply the merits of it, and to render it effectual to the sinner's heart. This is his office-character: he was to take of the things of Christ, and to show them unto us, to show us our want of them, and then to show us our interest in them. And in the present case he was to convince sinners that they wanted cleansing, and that there was a fountain opened for uncleanness, and by his grace he enables them to wash and be clean. As there can be no outward washing away of any pollution, but by an outward application; so there can be no inward cleansing, but by his spiritual application. If there were a bath famous for curing some particular disease, you know it could not cure the diseased person unless he was bathed in it; so neither can this fountain. It was opened for use; and whoever is cleansed by it must be washed in it, inwardly and spiritually, by the Holy Spirit. He applies, and faith receives, the benefit of that blood, which cleanses from all sin: for the apostle, speaking of Christ, says, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. The shedding of his blood had merit to cleanse; but faith apprehends it, and receives its cleansing virtue. That faith which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, and is wrought in the heart by his operation, relies upon the blood of Christ, and puts its whole trust and confidence in its power to cleanse, and then finds the heart sprinkled with it from an evil conscience, guilt being taken out, and peace brought in, with love and joy, and all the graces of the Spirit of God.

From what has been said, it appears, that there is a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness, and that the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse from all sin. It had this virtue given it by the covenant of grace, when the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity agreed to give their power to it; and nothing can resist the power of the Godhead. He who shed it was God and man in one person. As God he was coequal and coeternal with the Father, and when he took our nature, that in it he might obey and suffer for sinners, nothing could be wanting to render his obedience and sufferings absolutely complete: for all the works of God are perfect; nothing can be added to them, or taken from them. When Jesus shed his blood upon the cross, it was the will of the ever-blessed

Trinity that this blood should be of infinite efficacy to take away sin. It cannot want power to cleanse, because the whole power of the Godhead is engaged to make it effectual. It is the blood of the everlasting covenant. The Son has shed it, and the Father has received it as a full satisfaction and atonement for sin, and the application of it is now in the hand of the eternal and almighty Spirit; and when he applies it, and gives the sinner faith to rely upon it, what can then resist its power, or hinder its efficacy? My brethren, how do you find your hearts affected with these great truths? Do you see the polluting nature of sin, and do you desire to be cleansed from it in the fountain of Christ's blood? And do you therefore desire it, that you may be made holy as well as righteous? Would you have the blood of Christ to save you by its efficacy from the dominion of sin, as well as to save you by its merits from the guilt of sin? Sirs, what say your hearts to these things? Do you really wish to be cleansed from the power, as well as from the pollution of sin? If you do not wish for it, what do you think of the text? Is it true that there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness? and has the blood of Christ the cleansing virtue here ascribed to it? Can it take out the guilt of sins of the deepest dye? Are scarlet, crimson sins washed in it as white as snow? Surely they are; for it can cleanse from all sin. By the shedding of his blood, Christ obtained infinite merit to cleanse sinners; but in order to their being cleansed, it must be applied; and the application is now made by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Has he then applied it to you or not? This is the main point. Have you been washed in this fountain and been made clean? What are you the better for its cleansing others, if it never cleanse your souls? You can be benefited only from its application to you in particular, and by your experiencing the power of it in your own hearts. Let each of us, then, examine ourselves concerning this particular; and may we do it, through the assistance of God, with profit and improvement!

1 It is not unlikely but there may be some persons here who are not thoroughly acquainted with the defiling nature of sin, and who never heartily desired to be cleansed from it. This is the case of all unawakened sinners. They see not the pollution of their hearts, and lives, and therefore they are easy and content in their present state, without ever desiring to be cleansed by the blood of Christ. Does any one's conscience speak to him at present, and say—"This is my case; I have not been cleansed from my sins; nor do I desire it. My sins are so sweet and pleasing to me, that I should be very unhappy if I were to part with them." But are they more sweet and pleasant than heaven? and would you part with heaven rather than part with them? Consider this matter a little. You must part with one or the other; for hear what God says of you in his word. You are the objects of his hatred. "Thou, O God!" says the Psalmist, "hatest all workers of iniquity," Psal. v. 5. Yea, so great is his hatred, that he cannot suffer you to appear before him. "Thou art of purer eyes," says the prophet, "than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity," Hab. i. 13. And if you die in your iniquity, without the blood of sprinkling, you can never enter into heaven: "For no unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God," Eph. v. 5. To which agree the words of St. John in his description of the heavenly Jerusalem, "there shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth." This awful scripture will be fulfilled in you. In nowise shall you enter into the city of the living God, unless your polluted souls be washed in the Redeemer's blood. You will be shut out of his presence and glory, and your eternal habitation will be with unclean spirits, in the regions of torment and despair.

But, bad though your present state be, yet the gospel sets before you perfect deliverance. You are invited to come and be made clean. The fountain is open; and if you now find it in your heart to make use of it, you may be washed in it without money and without price. All is free. Your sins shall be freely pardoned, and your pollutions freely cleansed. Free grace shall do all for you, and all in you. And this day you have an offer of all its blessings. Close in with it, and they are all yours. But if you now reject them, you cannot pretend that you never heard of your danger; for you have now been warned of it. You cannot plead your ignorance of the merits of Christ's blood; for you have now

heard what great things the scripture says of it. From it are received all the graces of time, and all the blessings of eternity; and you have been invited to come, and to be cleansed freely in the fountain that was opened for sin and for uncleanness. If, then, you still refuse to be washed in this fountain, you are without excuse: for if you reject this wilfully, and harden your hearts against it, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Meditate upon this scripture. Think seriously what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. And may the eternal Spirit set in with this consideration, and so effectually convince you of the pollution and guilt of your sins, that you may seek to be made clean, and may find the blood of Jesus Christ, cleansing you from all sin.

2. Are there any of you, my brethren, who are now desiring to be made clean, and to be washed from all your sins? For you the fountain stands open; and what should hinder you from making use of it? Do you doubt of its power to cleanse you? Remember it is the blood of the everlasting covenant. It cleanses in virtue of the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity, and consequently by the power of the Godhead. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have agreed to make it almighty to do away sin; so that it cannot cleanse only in time, but it can also cleanse for ever and ever. This is the plain doctrine of scripture, and if you believe it, why do you not find great joy and peace in believing it?

Perhaps you think it can cleanse, but you are afraid it is not appointed for your cleansing. Nay, my brethren, reason not against your own comforts. For whom was it appointed, if not for you, who see your want of it, and who are desirous of experiencing its divine power? You have the warrant of God's word, authorising you to wash and be clean. The text says, the fountain was for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the professing members of the visible church; that, whenever any of them were convinced of their uncleanness, they might make use of this fountain, and have their hearts cleansed from an evil conscience. Oh! reject not then the offered blessing. Take it upon the warrant and authority of God's word, and doubt not but the fountain is open for you.

Why, then, are you not cleansed in it? Are you afraid that your sins are so many and so great that you cannot be made clean? As to their number, it can cleanse from all sin; and as to their greatness, it can take out the guilt of scarlet, crimson sins—the greatest that possibly can be: therefore this is no objection. You may come with all your sins and be washed freely from all in the fountain of Christ's blood.

Come then—But you draw back; you fear it would be presumption in such a sinner as you are. What! Is it presumption to believe in the word of God, which cannot be broken, and to rely upon the promises of God which are as unchangeable as himself? No. It is glorifying God, and honouring his word: whereas you make God a liar by your false modesty, as if he could break his word to you, and as if you might be disappointed when you claimed the fulfilling of his promises. My brethren, these things cannot be. God's word and promises are, like himself, without any variableness or shadow of turning; and whatever they offer you is yours, when you rely upon him for the receiving of it from his free grace. And since you have the authority of God's word and promises to silence your doubts and fears, are you resolved in the strength of grace to rely upon them? If you be, then they shall be made good to you. Heaven and earth shall pass away, rather than one tittle of them shall fail. Your robes shall be washed in the blood of the Lamb; and whatever graces and blessings Jesus has to give his people, shall be yours, in time and in eternity.

3. Perhaps some persons may inquire, Of what use is this fountain to believers? The uses of it are many and great. All their graces flow from it; all their duties are to be washed in it; and all their comforts are maintained by it. Surely, then, it is of great and infinite service to believers. Under the third head of this discourse I considered the high character given in scripture of this fountain. From it are received redemption, forgiveness of sins, justification, peace with God, sanctification, freedom of access to God, as a reconciled Father, eternal redemption, and the robe of everlasting righteousness, in which the saints stand con-

firmed in bliss. All these graces and blessings flow from the fountain of Christ's blood, and flow freely. They cost us nothing. They are the free gifts of our loving Saviour, which, of his abundant mercy, he bestows upon his people; and this makes his blood very precious to them, that the gifts, which are inestimable, they receive from it freely; and by their repeated trials of its worth and value they grow in the knowledge and love of its preciousness: for they find it not only necessary for their sins, but also for their duties. The holiest duty, which was ever done by a mere man, wanted washing in this fountain. The ceremonial law taught this doctrine in a very clear manner; for upon the holy crown of the high priest there was a plate of pure gold, with this inscription, Holiness to the Lord: "And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord," Exod. xxviii. 38. Herein he represented the office of the high priest of our profession, who bears the iniquity of our holy things · for there is imperfection in every duty, in every act of obedience some short coming, which requires the atoning blood of Christ, that it may be accepted before the Lord. There is no believer who loves God in that perfect manner which the spirituality of the law requires. This appears very evidently from their failings in the services which they pay him. When do they pray without some wandering thoughts? When do they hear the word as in the presence of God, and receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God? Do they not sometimes hear with great dulness, and at other times are not able to mix faith with what they hear? Are they not negligent in searching the scriptures, and negligent in praying for a blessing, when they do search them? How little do they treasure up in their memories? and how little fruit does the engrafted word bring forth in their lives? When they go to the Lord's table, how often do they complain of their want of devotion and gratitude? And therefore their services, yea, the very best of them, because of these imperfections and short comings, would not be acceptable, unless they were washed in the fountain of Christ's blood. Sensible of this they live by faith upon fresh applications of it, suing for its merit and hoping for its efficacy in every thing they do. And as the acceptance of their duties, so their comforts are derived from the blood of Christ. Their love, their peace, their joy flow from this fountain. This is their continual matter of rejoicing, that the blood of Christ was freely shed for them, and that he, who gave his blood for them, will with it give them all things. This bears them up under trials, strengthens them against temptations, supports them in sickness, and arms them against death. They know that all these things are working together, under God, for their good. Yea, they experience it, and that makes them happy; happy in time, and happy in eternity. What is now their crown of rejoicing below, will be much more so above. Then their joy will be full, when they shall join that innumerable company, whom no man can number, and with them give honour and glory, and blessing and praise to him that was slain, and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hath made them kings and priests unto God and his Father. Then they will know how to value that blood which brought them to such perfect and eternal blessedness. O Lord! help us to set a greater value upon it than we commonly do. Teach us more of our want of it, and of its worth. Supply us more abundantly with the graces and blessings purchased by its merit, and freely bestowed by its efficacy. And may the dear Lamb of God give his blessing to what has been now spoken, although it has been in much weakness, that, if it be his holy will, all who hear me this day may be brought to see and to lament their spiritual uncleanness, and to apply for cleansing to the blood of Jesus. Oh that the Lord God would direct you all to the fountain which he has opened for sin and for uncleanness; and may he give you faith to wash in it and to be cleansed from all sin, according to what we have been asking this day in the excellent words of our church.

"Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people, pardon and peace; that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Amen.*

DISCOURSE XI.

THE BALM OF GILEAD.

Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?—Jer. viii. 22.

All men love health. The desire of it is founded in nature. It is one of the natural instincts which never leaves us. So long as we love pleasure and hate pain, we cannot but love health, as the chief of all outward blessings. Indeed, it is to be desired beyond them all, because without it we can enjoy none of them; without it we are unfit for our worldly business and employment, and unfit for the duties of religion. A good man would therefore wish for health with a view to the concerns of a better life, as well as to those of the present life. All men desire it upon a temporal account. But, alas! how few have any real desire for the health of the soul! If the body be in great pain, with what haste do they send for relief! and how carefully do they follow the physician's prescription! But when their souls are wounded with sin, and they may endure the smart and anguish of their wounds for ever (for these are by any human means incurable); and when a divine remedy is proposed, and they hear of a loving and an almighty physician, under whose hands no patient was ever lost; yet they have not one wish to be healed. What can be the reason of this? Why are the very men who, with an invariable affection, love bodily health, so far from desiring the health of the soul, that when they have an offer of being healed of all their spiritual maladies, they neglect the remedy and despise the physician? Is not this unaccountable conduct? What can make the same men in the same case reason so differently? If they had an infallible remedy for the recovery of bodily health, there is not one of them who would reject it; but there is a sovereign remedy for the recovery of the health of the soul; there is a balm in Gilead, and a most kind and able physician there to apply it; and yet spiritual maladies abound. Let us inquire into the cause of this inconsistent behaviour. It is an inquiry in which we are all nearly concerned. Our welfare depends on our being healed of the wounds of sin by this balm of Gilead. We can have no true peace of conscience here, nor no true happiness hereafter, unless we take this sovereign medicine. May the Lord God dispose us all to take it by means of what shall be said in opening and explaining the text; in which there is,

First, Some sickness referred to.

Secondly, A sovereign medicine:—there is balm in Gilead to heal it.

Thirdly, A great physician to apply it: and all the means of healing being thus ready at hand, the question naturally follows, in the

Fourth place, Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

If we look back to the 17th verse, we shall find an account of the sickness referred to in the text. The people were stung with serpents and cockatrices, and of the most venomous and fiery sort, whose poison, once infused into the blood, acts like the most raging fire, consuming and drying up the fluids of the body, and in a short time bringing on certain death. "For behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord." This is a just picture of that more deadly poison which the old serpent, the devil, infused into both body and soul; the effects of which all the human race have felt; for he drew us all into sin, and the dreadful consequences of sin appear in that variety of diseases which bring down our bodies to the grave of death, and in that variety of corrupt and depraved appetites which proves the soul to be alienated from the life of God, and to be incapable, unless it be entirely changed, of enjoying God. It was sin which thus poisoned our nature: for before sin entered into the world, all things were good. There was no evil to afflict either body or soul. But when sin entered, then the sanction of the law took place, "In the day that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, dying

thou shalt die." Gen. ii. 17. In that day thy body shall become mortal, and liable to those pains and diseases, which in a course of years shall destroy its animal life; and thy soul shall be separated from the fountain of spiritual life, and cut off from all communion with God in this world; and in the next it shall be separated from him for ever; which is the second death. O sin! what hast thou done? Thou art the author of all the evils which mankind are capable of suffering in earth and hell. Thou broughtest them all upon us, thou enemy of God and man. And wilt thou afterwards pretend to be our friend? Wilt thou come to court us with promises of happiness, that, by deceiving us, thou mayest more effectually poison and destroy our bodies and souls? Look upon this base traitor, my brethren. Can he be a friend to your nature, who has subjected it to all the miseries of mortality? If you have any true love for yourselves, how can you love and cherish sin, which has made you liable to suffer the first and the second death? What! is this a friend to be taken into your bosom? one that will murder your body, and bring both body and soul into hell? Accustom yourselves to view sin in this light, and it will help you to see the horrible destructive nature of it. When you behold a dead corpse, think what a murderer sin is: for that body would never have died, if sin had not poisoned it. And then turn your eyes inwards, and let each man say to himself—This beloved body of mine, upon which I spend so much time and care, was made mortal by sin; and all the pains and diseases which I can suffer came from the same cursed cause; yea, from it came all the miseries which I deserve to suffer with devils and condemned spirits in the fire that never is to be quenched: and shall I love and delight to serve such an enemy? shall I give up the members of my body as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, and so work out mine own everlasting destruction? God forbid. As sin is the author of all the evil, which I do or can endure, I will therefore fight against it; and may the Lord God save me from the guilt, and deliver me from the dominion of it!

This is the language of every heart which is made sensible of the poisonous qualities of sin. When the awakened sinner feels the malignant venom working in his constitution, he will be led to abhor and to detest it, and the more so, when the scripture discovers to him the execrable foe, who poisoned him with sin; and that was the old serpent. What these serpents are said, in the 17th verse, to have done to the body, in poisoning it, the same did he both to body and soul; and as he did it at first in the serpent, he has therefore been known and distinguished by this name from the time that he deceived our first parents in the subtle serpent. The apostle has given us a very alarming description of him, Rev. xii. 9, where he is treating of the war which was in heaven between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels. "And the great dragon," he says, "was cast out; the old serpent, called the devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world." Here he is called the serpent, alluding to his crafty wiliness; and the old serpent, to denote his having employed all his wiles to deceive and ruin mankind. As soon as they were created, he plotted their destruction, and he became Satan, their sworn adversary, and the devil, their accuser, who sought to destroy their precious lives with the rage of a dragon; yea, with more rage than common dragons have, even with the burning fury of the great dragon. And, alas! he was successful: for he deceiveth the whole world: he poisoned the whole human race: he corrupted all flesh, and we are now groaning under the dreadful effects of our total corruption. The cursed venom of sin, which he infused into our bodies, still works in them; but its more cursed venom still works, though less perceptibly, in our souls. The poison keeps working in the body, until it bring on sickness and death, and reduce us to the dust, from whence we were taken; and it keeps working in the soul in every hateful and unholy temper, which tends to stir up the wrath and indignation of God, and to separate the soul for ever and ever from him, the fountain of life and glory.

This is the great and universal malady referred to in the text—the malady of sin, with which the old serpent, the devil, has poisoned the whole world. When he deceived our first parents, he then poisoned the fountain; and all the streams which have been ever since flowing from it partake of the direful infection: for the word of truth declares, "That as by one man sin entered into the world, and

death by sin, so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." Here the entrance of sin is said to be the cause of the entrance of death, and we all die in Adam, therefore we all sinned in him; for the wages of sin is death. Now God, being infinitely just and righteous, would not pay the wages, unless there were some sin to deserve them; but infants receive the wages of sin, and consequently they are sinners; they die in Adam, because in him they sinned. "For by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Thus was our whole nature, both body and soul, corrupted by the fall; and there is not a sound part or faculty in either of them. They are corrupt and abominable altogether, and in nothing does this total corruption more evidently discover itself than in their entire blindness and insensibility of their dangerous condition. They are poisoned, and yet they know it not; nay, they are so unwilling to know it, that when we inform them of it, they are highly offended. They cannot bear to be told of it, no, not by the ministers of the gospel, whose office and duty it is. We are sure to stir up their rage and hatred, if we discover to them the workings of this poison in their hearts; and if we appeal to the effects of it in their lives, and refer them to the plentiful streams of iniquity, which are continually flowing from the corrupt fountain of the heart, then they cannot bear us; they are like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming ever so wisely. They are resolved not to be disturbed about their sins, and therefore they will not hear of their sickness or of their danger. They had rather die of their malady than be made uneasy about it. Let sin do its worst in the next life, in the present they will enjoy it; and in sweet security, too, if they can. Is not this an astonishing degree of infatuation? Is it not one of the strongest delusions of the devil, that he should make those very men insensible of their spiritual maladies, who are exquisitely sensible of the least bodily malady, whose fears are all alarmed at the thoughts of their dying to this world, but who have not the least concern about their dying from God and glory? Are any of you, my brethren, in this case? Are you easy about the state of your souls, having never been in any distress about original and actual sin? Did you never feel yourselves so sick of both, that you were afraid you should perish everlastingly? If not, consider what it is which keeps you in this fatal security. Are not you sinners? For all have sinned. And has not sin poisoned both body and soul? And is not this one of the sad, stupifying effects of its poison, that, while there is but a step between you and death, yet you have no concern about your being healed? Are these things so? If they be, may the almighty God awaken you to a sense of your danger. Oh that he may set home and fix such a conviction of sin upon your consciences, that, feeling your malady, you may earnestly seek the great physician's help, and may happily find that there is balm in Gilead; which is the

Second particular I was to consider. Glory be to God, who hath not left us without remedy. Our disease is dangerous, but there is balm in Gilead, which can heal perfectly and eternally. The country of Gilead was famous for a precious balm which grew there. "Go up to Gilead, and take balm," says the prophet Jeremiah, xlvi. 11. Its healing virtue is described by him, chap. li. 8, where, speaking of the downfal of Babylon, he says, "Take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed." This sovereign medicine, which then grew in Gilead, could assuage the pain of wounds, and heal them, and thereby was a type of the gracious remedy which God had provided for the healing of the wounds of sin; namely, the most precious blood of the Lamb of God, applied and made effectual by the Holy Spirit: for as this cleanses away all the pollutions, so it heals all the diseases of sin. The scripture has treated largely of its healing virtue; but it is nowhere more forcibly recommended than in the parable of the good Samaritan. Our Lord says, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." This certain man was Adam, whose possession was in a paradise of peace and rest; and there he was, innocent, safe and happy: but he left this blissful state of his own accord, contrary to God's express commandment, and he fell among thieves—Satan and his angels—who drew him into sin, stripped him of his raiment, and robbed him of his righteousness, in which his

soul had hitherto appeared in immaculate purity before God. This spotless robe they took away, and left poor fallen man naked and wounded. They wounded his body with those pains and diseases which bring it down to the dust, from whence it was taken; and they wounded his soul in all its faculties; his understanding with darkness; his will with a vicious choice; and his affections with worldly-mindedness; so that he placed his love upon the creature instead of the Creator: they wounded his conscience with guilt, and with fear of death and of hell. "And they departed, leaving him half dead;" for his soul, the better part, was separated from God, and already dead in trespasses and sins, and the body was dying. When man was fallen into this helpless state, the patriarchal dispensation took place from Adam to Moses, under which the first-born was priest, and had a right to offer up the appointed sacrifices; but these could not give life to the sinner, and therefore the priest came and looked upon him, and passed by on the one side, being unable to raise him up from the death of sin. Next succeeded the Levitical dispensation from Moses to Christ: the Levite came and looked upon him, and passed by on the other side, being unable, by any of the legal rites and ceremonies, to raise fallen man to his former righteousness and perfection. "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was." Samaritan signifies a keeper; and it here stands for the keeper of Israel, whose compassions fail not: "for when he saw him, he had compassion on him." His love disposed him to use his power for the sinner's recovery. He was almighty, and he resolved to use his almighty power to heal him. He went up to him, and applied the balm of Gilead—"he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; wine, the established type of the most precious blood of the Lamb of God; and oil, the known emblem of the salutary influence of the Holy Spirit. Pour these into the deepest and most dangerous wounds of sin, and they will infallibly work a perfect cure; for the blood has a divine virtue to heal, being appointed and ordained of God for that very purpose. It cleanseth us, says one who had experienced its virtue, and by cleansing healeth us from all sin. And no wonder; because it is the blood of God. He who shed it was God and man united in one Christ, and therefore it had infinite and divine merit: and when he stood in the place of sinners, obeyed and suffered for them, and was obedient even unto death, his obedience and sufferings could want nothing to render them as satisfactory as the law and justice of the Father could require; because his blood had virtue as a release to discharge believers from all the pains and penalties to which they were subjected for their sins, and as a purchase to put them in possession of their forfeited estate. The apostle describes its operating as a release, when he says of it, "that we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" and as a purchase, when he says, "that Christ, having washed us from our sins in his own blood, hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father."

Now, since the blood of Christ has this sovereign healing virtue, and since we have through it redemption, even eternal redemption from all the pains and miseries of sin, surely, then, it is an essential ingredient in that precious balm of Gilead, which has virtue to heal every sinner who takes it, let his case be ever so dangerous. But then it must be taken. A sick man may have a very good remedy at hand; but if he never take it, it can never cure him. In like manner, it is not enough that the blood of Christ can heal, but, in order to heal, it must be applied. The application makes it effectual, and therefore we read of the blood of sprinkling both in the Old Testament and in the New. The blood must be sprinkled upon the conscience, in order to heal the wounds of sin; and this is the office of the Holy Spirit. He applies the blood of Christ: he brings this healing balm to the wounded soul. And as oil was the emblem of his salutary influence, therefore, in the good Samaritan's prescription, we find the medicine was made up of oil and wine; of the blood of Christ; and of the grace of his Spirit; which two, sweetly joined and tempered together, make up the healing balm of Gilead. There is not a wound of sin so deep, a disease of sin so desperate, but the blood of Christ, applied by the Holy Spirit, can heal them: for God hereby healeth the broken in heart, and giveth this medicine to heal their sickness. Although they be half dead, yet it can recover them; because it ope-

rates by a divine and almighty power. The blood of Christ can raise the deadest soul to justification of life, and through sanctification of the Spirit this life is renewed and strengthened, day by day, until every spiritual malady of sin be removed, and sorrow and sighing be done away for ever. Hear this, ye mourners in Sion, and lift up your drooping heads. Looking into yourselves, you may have reason to grieve. Your sins are many and great. They have wounded your consciences. You feel the smart, and your distress is exquisite. But despair not. Lo! there is balm in Gilead. The blood of Jesus is an infallible remedy. The Holy Spirit is almighty to apply it; and he has already showed you your want of it. Oh that he may give you grace to wait until he supply your wants, and you feel its sovereign virtue healing your wounded consciences! And to encourage you to seek and wait until you find, remember that there is not only balm in Gilead, but also that there is a physician there; as I am, in the

Third place, to consider, Under whose hands you cannot fail of a perfect recovery; and he is no less a person than the great physician of souls, who is also God over all, blessed for ever. He who created all things, visible and invisible, and who supports them by the word of his power, vouchsafes to heal his people of their sins; so there can be no doubt of his power, because he is almighty to heal. And can there be any doubt of his love? Did not his love bring him down from heaven to the lowest humiliation, even to veil his divine glory under a covering of flesh? and did not his love then lead him to put forth his divine power to heal every one who applied to him for a bodily cure? Whereby he demonstrated to us his readiness to exert the same power to heal the spiritual infirmities of those who come to him for his assistance. The eternal God, whom angels and archangels worship and adore, was pleased to be manifested in the flesh; so that God and man were one Christ, and the one Christ, the God-man, stood up in the place of sinners, as their representative: for them he obeyed the law, and suffered the pains and penalties due to the breach of it, that by his stripes they might be healed: he was obedient, even unto death, and then rising from the dead, as their representative, he wrought out an all-perfect righteousness for them, which being imputed unto them by faith, they thereby received justification to life, and all the deadly wounds of sin are healed. Thus the great physician of souls has demonstrated his love. You may read it in every action of his life, and in every suffering unto death. You may read it engraven in every wound of his crucified body. What were the marks and scars which the crown of thorns made in his head, and the whips and scourges made on his back, but visible signs and seals of his love? The love which led him to his agony and bloody sweat, to his bitter cross and passion, was greater than that of the strongest instinct and natural affection in the human breast: "For can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee, saith the Lord: for I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." While he looks upon them, he cannot forget his people; because on the palms of his hands are the prints of the nails by which he was fastened to the cross; and these prints are the precious engravings of his wonderful love. Look upon the crucified Jesus, my Christian brethren, as wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities, and see if ever there was love like his. Every wound speaks forth his love; every bruise loudly proclaims the greatness of it. His death demonstrates his love to have been stronger than death, and his pierced side showed that he had set his people as a seal upon his heart; for from thence there flowed blood and water; water to cleanse the pollution, and blood to heal the wounds of their sins. Surely, then, he who shed his heart's blood for them cannot want love. Let this encourage poor dejected souls to wait upon him. Why are ye so troubled, as if God had not provided a medicine to heal the broken-hearted? Is there not balm in Gilead? Is there not a physician there? Oh! wait upon him, then, for his kind assistance, and you will certainly find that the fountain of his love is not dried up. He is now indeed on the throne of glory, king of kings, and lord of lords; but he has the same tender heart which once bled to death upon the cross. Ap-

ply to him for relief, and he will not cast you out. You can have no distemper but what he has power to heal; for he is an almighty physician; and no distemper but what he has love to heal; for God is love, and the Saviour, the Lord Christ, is God. How great soever the wounds of sin may be, yet, if you fall low at his footstool, crying for mercy, he will not reject your suit. What! was it ever known that he cast out the prayer of the poor destitute? No. There never was, and there never will be such an instance. When he was upon earth, he never refused to hear any one who asked his help. He never sent one single person away unrelieved, whatever his disease might be, or however unworthy he was to be healed of it. He cured all that came to him; and he did not half-cure them; but it is written, "they were made perfectly whole." Perfectly does he heal all the wounds of sin, and eternally. He heals for ever. His medicines restore his patients to everlasting health. He forgiveth all their sins, and healeth all their infirmities, and thus admits them into the city of the living God, the inhabitant of which shall not say, I am sick; for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity, and so freely and fully forgiven, that God will remember it no more. And is this indeed the character of the great physician of souls? Is his heart so full of love, that he is always disposed to use his power for the perfect recovery of convinced and afflicted sinners? Is he as willing as he is able to heal them? No doubt he is. Let such persons, then, seek his help, and look up unto him for medicine to heal their wounded consciences. He hath wounded you out of love, and he will heal. He hath convinced you of your wants, in order that you might wait upon him to have them supplied. Wait, then, and he will give you abundant reason to admire and to praise the wonders which he will do for you and for your salvation. He will pardon you freely, and will heal all the wounds which sin has made, and then he will enable you to declare upon your own happy experience, that there is balm in Gilead, and a physician there.

Now, since this is the case, why do men labour under the maladies of sin? Since the blood of Christ is the sovereign balm, and Christ is the physician, whose power and love are able and willing to heal the most desperate disease, and the Holy Spirit is almighty to apply the healing balm, may we not then reasonably inquire, Why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? And this is the

Fourth and last particular to be considered. Why are any men sick when they have an offer of health? Do they choose, do they love sickness? Yes. The same men, whose every pulse beats after bodily health, choose and love spiritual sickness. They are alarmed at the least disorder which attacks the body, and yet they have no concern about the soul, although it be wounded with sin, and sick unto death, yea, just ready to perish. How absurd is this conduct! Thus to prefer the health of the meaner and baser part of their constitution to the more noble and exalted part, is a flagrant absurdity. Nay, not to desire the health of the soul, when it is offered them, is acting unnaturally against their own interest. To reject it, when the great physician himself offers it in his word, is treating him with vile ingratitude; and not to receive this inestimable remedy at his hands, when he sends out his ministers to invite sinners to take it, to spurn it from them, as if it was a thing which they did not value, or did not want; this is the height of sin and wickedness; for whosoever thus accounteth the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and thereby doth despite unto the spirit of grace, for him there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation.

This being the case, the question returns, What can be the reason that the health of the daughter of my people is not recovered? Here is the all-healing balm of Gilead; here is an all-wise and an almighty physician; and why then, my brethren, will you not for his sake, for your own sakes, receive the sovereign medicine at his hands? What other cause can be assigned, but that you love your disease more than health. Sin, with all its infirmities, is dearer to you than the full enjoyment of the pleasures of a perfect recovery. Sin, although you die of it, is more precious than to receive life from the hands of our redeeming God. Sin, although it send you to hell, is more desirable than health in heaven. Sin, although it bring on you never-ending torments with devils and condemned

spirits, is sweeter to you than these eternal joys which are at God's right hand for evermore. Oh! what a wonderful delusion is there in sin, that it should thus make men love it more than health and happiness! How strong is the delusion, since the same men reason in the things belonging to the body directly contrary to what they do in things belonging to the soul! Propose immediate relief to any of them lying in a severe fit of the gout or stone, they embrace the proposal with eager joy. Propose immediate relief from the pains and miseries of sin, they will not hear of, much less take the remedy. There is balm in Gilead, a physician is there, even the Lord Jesus, the sovereign physician of souls, and yet they will not apply to him. Sick as they are, and ready to expire with the infirmities of sin, yet they had rather perish than be beholden to him for a cure. All his attributes, his power, his wisdom, his goodness, cannot win them. All his graces, his pardoning, justifying, sanctifying grace, have no influence. He may be a God almighty to save, but the charms of sin, though but for a season, seem to them preferable to the blessings of his present and eternal salvation.

But whence is it that sin should be capable of deluding men so far as to make them prefer sickness to health? The true cause is this: Sin blinds their eyes, and hardens their hearts. It stupifies and deadens the senses, so that they feel not their spiritual in the same manner as they do their bodily diseases. The understanding is in darkness; they know not that it is diseased. When they know it, the memory is short and soon forgets it. When they remember it, yet conscience is fast asleep; it neither checks the will in the choice, nor the affections in the love and enjoyment of sin. Thus has sin impaired all their faculties, and they have no desire to be healed, because they are insensible of their malady. When we endeavour to convince them of it, they will not believe us; and because they do not feel the immediate smart of their sins, they will not therefore give credit to us when we declare, from the word of God, that they will smart for them, and to eternity, unless they come to the physician of souls to be healed. And this will be the case, so long as they are intent upon their present pursuits, and live entirely to sense and to its enjoyments. All this time their own hearts deceive them; for it is one of the greatest delusions of sin, to keep men ignorant of the true state of their souls. It flatters them with peace, while the Almighty is at war with them; and it promises them happiness in the enjoyment of those things which will bring on them eternal torments. And while it keeps them in this state of carnal security, nothing can appear to them more absurd than to hear that they are sick when they fancy themselves to be in perfect health.

1. My brethren, are any of you in this state? Do you feel no pain, and do you apprehend no danger from your sins? Are you entirely secure, although your sins be unpardoned, and God might glorify his justice by immediately inflicting the deserved punishment? Nay, do you not find part of sin's punishment already inflicted? and why, then, should you hope to escape the remaining part? For have you not suffered some of those pains and sicknesses which, in a course of years, will infallibly bring down your bodies to the grave, and inflict the sentence on them, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?" The body was not at first liable to this sentence, until sin poured its cursed poison into it, and infected it with those painful maladies which no art of physic can heal, and which wear it down to the grave of death. Every pain which it feels; every sickness which it labours under; all the outward and inward dangers which threaten its mortal life; are owing to sin: for the wages of sin is death. All the harbingers of death, which afflict and weaken men's bodies, and thereby prepare the way for his seizing on them, and carrying them prisoners to the dark and cold regions of the grave, all these derive their power over us from sin: for, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned. Sin has most undoubtedly wounded your bodies with pains and sicknesses, with mortality and death: and what a madness, then, and infatuation is it to think that sin has not wounded your souls as well as your bodies? For what says the scripture? "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Is not that a desperate wound? It shall "die." How! Can the soul die? Yes. It may be dead in trespasses and sin. Its death consists in being separated from God, the fountain of life, and in having no communion with him, either in this

world or in the next. And is not this a greater punishment than the death of the body? and is it not infinitely more painful too, thus to die from God and glory, and to be tormented with the worm that never dieth, and in the fire that never shall be quenched? What! is not that a wound indeed which thus alienated you from the life of God? Yea, a most dreadful wound, the torment and anguish of which you may suffer for ever and ever? Men and brethren, are these things so? Examine the evidence, and determine. Is not sin the great murderer, who has wounded your bodies with pains, and diseases, and mortality, and has separated your souls from God, the fountain of life, and made you subject to the first and second death? Is not the proof of these truths as complete and full as the case will admit of? Does it not amount even to a demonstration? And do you not then stand in need of some sovereign balm to heal you? and do you not want a physician? You certainly do, as much as ever dying men did. And why, then, do you neglect the remedy, and slight the physician?

But perhaps some persons may say, How can these things be? Am not I in perfect health? and how then can I labour under those diseases which you are mentioning? Yes, my brother, you may be in health, your body may be perfectly well, but you have a miserable, sinful soul within you, which is infected with the plague and foul leprosy of original sin, and which has been wounded with thousands of actual crimes. This is your case, and it is most deplorable. All the powers in nature can give you no relief. There is no remedy in heaven or earth, but the blood of Jesus Christ applied by the grace of his good Spirit; and yet sin has such power over you as to persuade you to neglect that precious medicine, without which you must perish everlastingly!

What! say you, Can I be in this desperate condition, and not know and feel it? Yes, you may. It is an undoubted matter of fact, that sin brought as many diseases upon the soul, as it did upon the body. Indeed, it left the soul entirely sick, and without any soundness in it, as we daily confess in the words of our church—"there is no health in us." And if there be no health in you, surely, then, you are sick in every part? And you have no sense of your malady, because sin has so impaired all your faculties, that you have no spiritual discernment. You do not discern your case to be dangerous, which is one of the worst symptoms you could have. It proves you to be far gone in a spiritual lethargy; so that the less sense you have, the greater is your danger. And is not this a dangerous disease which makes the patient insensible? For how can he avoid perishing of it, while conscience, which ought to give the alarm, is seared with a hot iron, and the other faculties of the soul are past feeling? This is the scripture account of your condition; and if it has not convinced you, may the Lord God Almighty make you sensible of your malady, that you may apply to the great physician of souls for the balm of Gilead, along with those convinced sinners who are now waiting upon him for the sovereign remedy.

2. When sinners are first brought to a sense of their guilt and of their danger, and conscience begins to do its duty, they are apt to write bitter things against themselves, and through unbelief to reject the offered mercies of the gospel. They feel the wounds of sin more sharp and painful than ever its pleasures had been sweet and delightful. The law stirs up guilt, terrifies their consciences with its threatenings, sets God before their eyes as armed with almighty justice to inflict the threatened punishment, and they see no way open to escape. Speak to persons in this distress of the balm of Gilead, the remedy appointed of God for their disease, they cannot believe it is able to heal them; or if they are brought to believe this, yet they reject the comforts of the blessed medicine, for want of faith to apply it to themselves.

Let us consider this case a little. My brethren, sin has wounded your bodies and souls, and you are become sensible of the malady. You feel the anguish of it, and you desire to be healed. What objection have you to the remedy which the Lord God had appointed for your recovery? Has it not virtue to heal your wounded conscience? You know what the remedy is: It is the balm of Gilead, the most precious blood of the Lamb of God, applied by the eternal Spirit; and it heals not by any natural or physical qualities, but by a divine and spiritual efficacy. The power of God is always present with it to heal. You cannot there-

fore object against medicine; because God has provided it, and he, with his own arm, renders it effectual for the cure of wounded consciences.

True, say you, I believe the remedy is infallible; but how do I know that God will apply it to my soul? You are wounded, and it is balm for wounded consciences, therefore for yours. God has awakened you; he has brought you to the knowledge of your disease, and you feel the pain of it. For what reason has God done this? but that the sense of your misery might send you to the physician for his advice and assistance. When the enemy of souls sees you thus escaping out of his hands, he would try to persuade you that the remedy is not for you; whereas you are the very persons to whom the gospel offers it. Christ says, he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and you are sinners; you feel the misery of sin; and therefore Christ came to call you. Since you are sick, he calls you, as much as if he had called you by name in the gospel, to receive of him the balm of Gilead to heal all your spiritual infirmities.

You think you should be happy, if you could believe this; but you find so many and such desperate wounds, so many soul-murdering sins, that you dare not believe the remedy is for such as you. But why not? Is not the medicine for sin-sick souls? And the more sick you are, the more you want the medicine; and be your case the worst that ever was, yet the virtue of the medicine is almighty. If, from the sole of the foot even to the crown of the head, there was no soundness in you, but in every part wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores, yet the balm of Gilead can make a perfect cure; yea, if you have ten thousand more wounds than you have, it could heal them all. Consider, then, how greatly you disparage and vilify the love and power of our divine physician by supposing your sins more able to kill than he is to heal. Is not he the Lord God Almighty? and are not all things possible with him? Oh! be not faithless, then, but believing.

But perhaps guilt suggests to you, My case is singular; I have sinned against light and conviction. Often did I resolve to leave my sins, but I as often broke my resolutions; and therefore I fear that I have sinned away my day of grace, and that there is no mercy for me. Your case is bad, but not desperate. Looking back on your past life, you should be humbled, but not despair; for are you not convinced of your want of the balm of Gilead? and does it not, by a divine virtue, heal all manner of sins? Sins against light, against many solemn resolutions, and against many warnings of conscience, as well as other sins? The medicine certainly can heal them all; because it is appointed of God for that purpose, and by his almighty power he renders it effectual; and therefore whatever keeps you from relying upon its power to heal you, is an enemy to your soul. Oh! pray against unbelief; for that is at the bottom of all your objections against this sovereign medicine; and may the Lord give you faith to be healed!

What! can it heal me, says some poor dejected broken-hearted sinner, who sees nothing but sin in his heart and life? Yes; it is appointed for you by name. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds," Psalm cxlvii. 3. The great physician has an especial regard for your case. He says, he was sent to heal the broken-hearted. But not such as I am, says one; my heart is worse than broken; it is dead to God and to the things of God. Be it so. Our physician is famous for raising the dead. It is his office and his glory. In the parable of the good Samaritan, he healed the man who was half dead. His soul was as dead to God as yours is. But the precious balm, which was applied to him, made him alive to God. The same remedy can quicken you, although you have been dead in trespasses and sins; and as you are so far quickened as to see your want of this remedy, may you soon experience its sovereign virtue, and receive from it saving health.

After many doubts and fears have been silenced, new ones still arise. Unbelief may perhaps have been suggesting to some of your hearts; the medicine certainly can heal all cases; but I have nothing to recommend me to the physician. Have you nothing? Then this is your best recommendation. He always relieves poor distressed dying objects, who have nothing to bring him but their sins and their miseries. He is therefore a physician, that he may relieve such; for, by healing those whom none else can heal, he gets all the glory;

and by healing them freely, he exalts his sovereign grace. Thus he acted in the parable of the good Samaritan. What had the wounded traveller to recommend him? Was it not, that he was miserable and helpless? This moved the Lord's compassion, and he showed him mercy. "Go, and do thou likewise." Apply to the great physician, because thou art sick, and canst not heal thyself, and then he will exalt his rich grace and love, by freely forgiving thee all thy sins, and by pouring the balm of Gilead into thy wounded conscience, to heal all thine infirmities.

When this objection, which arises from pride and unbelief, is removed, and we would persuade the convinced sinner to rely upon the promises of health and salvation, which God has made in his word, he has still difficulties to get over. He is afraid it would be presumption in him to rely upon the promises, and to take comfort from believing that he shall have his share and interest in them; whereas he is the very person to whom the promises are made. His particular case is described in Luke iv. 18. Our Saviour says, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed and commissioned me with full powers to relieve every distressed object that shall apply to me for help. Are you a poor afflicted sinner? He has good news for you: he was ordained to preach the gospel to the poor. Have you a broken, contrite heart? He is sent to heal the broken-hearted. Are you in bondage to sin and Satan? He is sent to preach and to give deliverance to the captives. Is your understanding blind and ignorant of spiritual things? He is sent to preach and to give recovery of sight to the blind. Are you fast bound with the chains of sin? and has the iron entered into your soul? He is sent to set at liberty them that are bruised. Here is your character: you are poor broken-hearted captives, blind and miserable. Here is your promise: Christ is appointed of God, and has a divine commission to supply all your wants. Is it presumption, then, in you to apply this promise to yourselves? What! after God has graciously made it for the comfort of your afflicted consciences, will you say, it would be presumption in us to take comfort from it? My brethren, the promise cannot be broken. By relying upon it, it is yours. Your dependence upon it calls upon God's faithfulness to fulfil it to you. And it is no presumption; it is a high act of faith, not to stagger at the promise through unbelief, but to give glory to God, by relying upon it. May he enable you thus to give glory to him! and you shall find that his promise is, like himself, unchangeable, and that his word cannot be broken.

Since, then, there is balm in Gilead for wounded consciences provided purposely for you, and since your objections against receiving it are groundless, why, my brethren, will you not apply to the almighty physician, and now ask his help? Oh! that this may be the accepted time, and this the day of your salvation! Fall down at his feet, implore his assistance, and his tender heart will melt with compassion towards you. If you are discouraged in your addresses to him, it is because you have not clear ideas of his power and love. He is almighty. He can heal the most broken heart and the most wounded conscience; and his love never failed to influence his power to heal such cases when they came before him. Keep not, then, poring upon your wounds and sores. By looking too much at them, you cherish your doubts and fears. Look unto Jesus; remember his advice; "Look unto me, and be ye saved." You should look into yourselves, to see your want of salvation, and look unto him for a supply of your wants; and, that you may be supplied out of his fulness, believe his promises. Rely upon his faithfulness to fulfil them to your souls, and thereby you engage his power to give you health and salvation.

3. Blessed be his holy name, for exerting his divine virtue at this day, and for healing all manner of spiritual sickness and all manner of disease among the people! Great numbers, now alive, are witnesses for him, that his hand is not shortened. Still he saves his people from sin, and from all the maladies brought upon them by sin. You, my Christian brethren, who have had experience of his divine power and love, ought to show forth his praise. It becometh you well to be thankful. Much has been forgiven you; therefore you should love much. The sweet Psalmist of Israel calls upon you by his example to a grateful acknowledgment of the Lord's mercies—"Bless the Lord, O my

soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thine infirmities," Psalm ciii. 1—3. After you have received such great benefits, it will be your delight to praise him with your lips, and with your lives. The health and strength which he has freely given you, you will use in his service and to his glory, until he take you to himself, and give you more happy experience of his great salvation, by delivering your soul from every infirmity and corruption; and the time will not be long before he will raise your bodies from the grave, and make them like his own glorious body. And then he will get himself honour indeed, when he shall heal both body and soul of all the wounds of sin, and shall heal them for ever and ever. That is the glory of our physician: he heals to eternity: he makes the spirits of just men perfect; and they stand before the throne of God without any spot or stain of corruption. And in the morning of the resurrection, this corruptible body shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Thus he bestows eternal health and salvation upon both body and soul. Where is there, nay, where can there be, such a physician? There is none like unto thee, O Lord! glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. Still thou art displaying the wonders of thy power and love, and administering thy sovereign balm for recovering the health of the daughter of thy people. Oh that thou wouldst display thy divine virtue among us this day! Arise, thou Sun of righteousness, upon all this congregation, with healing under thy beams, and save us from every malady of sin, from the pollution, from the guilt, and from the power of it; and save us from the punishment of it with thine eternal salvation. Hear us, thou almighty Saviour, and answer us to the glory of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit, three coequal and coeternal persons in one Jehovah, to whom we give honour and worship, and blessing and praise, now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen.*

DISCOURSE XII.

UPON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.—2 Peter i. 4.

When the Lord God first published his law, in Paradise, he enforced it with proper sanctions. He promised to our first parents the continuance of his favour and immortal life, if they continued to keep the law; but if they should transgress it, he threatened them with the loss of his favour, and with the first and the second death. Upon their transgression, the promises became null and void. All right and title to them was forfeited, and the sovereign lawgiver was bound to inflict the threatened penalties. His truth, his justice, his holiness called upon him to put the sanctions of the law in force: accordingly, the offenders were arrested and brought to his bar; and being examined, they confessed their crime, but studied to throw part of the blame upon their tempters. The man could make no other defence, but that the woman offered him the temptation; and the woman had no plea to urge, but that the serpent beguiled her. Upon this confession they were found guilty; but the Lord God, whose mercies are over all his works, was pleased to make a discovery to them of the covenant of grace. He revealed to them his mind and will concerning the pardon of their transgression, and promised them a Saviour, who should bruise the serpent's head, and thereby destroy his power. The serpent's poison lies in his head; and when this is bruised, he can do no more mischief. The promised seed was to undertake this work, and for this purpose was the Son of God to be manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. This first promise, and all the following promises of grace and mercy centre in Jesus Christ: for all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God. In him they are Yea; he undertook to ratify and to make them good;

and in him they are Amen; they are confirmed and fulfilled to believers. Every promise made in Christ is an act of God's free grace, and which being made, his perfections bind him to fulfil; for he has engaged, in the promise, to give the grace and blessing therein mentioned to those who believe in Jesus Christ; so that the believer's happiness consists in living by faith upon the promises. Faith apprehends and receives Christ as held forth in the promise, and thereby gets possession of the promised blessing. While faith is kept thus in act and exercise, the believer walks safely and comfortably: although he has many enemies, and is in the midst of many dangers, yet he has a promise of God's help to support him in every estate and circumstance of life, and to carry him through all trials and troubles. If he rely upon this promised help, he cannot be disappointed; for the promise cannot possibly fail. All the perfections of God stand engaged to see it fulfilled; and when faith calls upon God, and relies on him for the fulfilling of it, he cannot deny himself, or break the word that is gone out of his mouth. Faith brings down his almighty power to make a way for the fulfilling of the promise, and thus the believer receives a support under all dangers, safety against all enemies, and a cordial against all troubles. This is his happiness. He staggers not at the promise of God through unbelief, but is strong in faith, giving glory to God; and God gives grace to him and makes his faith stronger, by which he finds more of the sweetness and riches of the promises. My brethren, I wish you were all in possession of this happiness; and it is my present design to direct and to encourage you to seek it. The scripture which I have chosen for this purpose affords us some very powerful motives. May the Lord God render our present consideration of them useful and profitable to all our souls, that we may know clearly,

First, The nature of the promises of God;

Secondly, The character of those to whom the promises belong; and

Thirdly, Their exceeding greatness and preciousness. And while we are considering those particulars, may we have the Lord's presence with us. We have a promise of it: "Wherever two or three," says he, "are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Oh that he may be present with us at this time! May he send the Holy Spirit of promise into all our hearts to teach us,

First, the nature of the promises of God. I define a promise to be an act of God's free grace, whereby he has engaged, in his word, to bestow upon believers all the blessings which come to them through the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ. The promise can spring from no other cause than from free grace. God had no motive to induce him but what arose from his own abundant and unmerited love, and there was no power to compel him to make any promise to fallen man. He had broken the law, and was subject to all the pains and penalties threatened to transgression; and if God had left him in this state without any promise, he would have dragged on a miserable life under the terrors of his guilty conscience, until the executioner came to call him to God's awful bar, and being tried there, and found guilty, how could he escape the damnation of hell? To fallen man, thus subject to the present and eternal punishment of sin, God was pleased to make a revelation of mercy. He took compassion on him, and provided for his salvation, by the covenant of grace, which is a covenant of promises. Such is the exalted grace of God, that he has made a free promise of deliverance from all the miseries of sin; and that convinced sinners might be enabled to rely upon the promise, and to find comfort in it, God revealed it in his word, which cannot be broken. There it is written and entered upon record; and what he has there engaged to bestow upon believers, shall be made good to them for ever and ever. To them he will freely give without money and without price, both in time and in eternity, all the blessings which are the fruit of the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ. To them he gives freely what cost him an infinite sum. The merit of all that he did and suffered is made theirs by faith; and faith is one of the blessings which he obtained among the rest; for it is one of his precious gifts which he bestows upon his people by the operation of his good Spirit, who works with and animates the incorruptible seed of the word, rendering it the means of forming

faith in their hearts. The word of promise begets faith in them, by the Holy Spirit's enabling them first to rely upon it, and afterwards to experience its sweetness and richness, and then they know the truth of the fore-mentioned definition, namely, that a promise is an act of God's free grace, whereby he has engaged, in his word, to bestow upon believers all the blessings which come to them through the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Now since this is the nature of the promises, there is but one point to be cleared up, and it is this—What security has God given for the fulfilling of the promises? The Lord knew what power unbelief had over careless sinners, and how hard it was to bring convinced sinners to believe, and how believers would be tempted by their remaining corruptions to entertain doubts and fears; and therefore he provided the most full and perfect evidence that the case will admit of.

First, Every promise stands confirmed in his revealed word; which word is the mind and will of God made known to his creatures, and which is therefore as perfect and unchangeable as God himself is. His word cannot be broken. It is impossible to break it. What weapons would you use? force of arms? What force can you use against the almighty God? His mind cannot alter or change, and thereby suffer his word to be broken; for with God there is no variableness or shadow of turning. And since nothing from without, and nothing from within, can cause any variableness in him, his word therefore will stand fast for ever and ever. God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? What should hinder him? Is not his hand almighty to fulfil what he hath spoken with his mouth? Here, then, is safe ground for faith to stand upon. You can rely upon one another's word. When a man has a fair character, and is known to be of good principles, you can trust him; and you have a saying among yourselves, That an honest man's word is as good as his bond. And may you not give better credit to God's word? For what suspicion can you entertain of its ever being broken? He, who is truth itself, has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away;" they shall not pass away, because my almighty power shall establish them in time and in eternity. And is there not, then, sufficient reason to rely upon those words which God declares shall not pass away? And is there not abundant evidence to encourage the convinced sinner to trust to that word of promise, which can never fail, but shall stand fast, when heaven and earth shall pass away, and the place of them shall no more be found? Even then, when all things else fail, the promises will be receiving their full completion. Surely, then, the word of God, which cannot be broken, is a good security for our relying upon the promises.

But, secondly, God, who knoweth our hearts, out of tender compassion to our infirmities, has been graciously pleased to confirm his promises, not only by his word, but also by his oath. The oath was the obligation which the persons of the ever-blessed Trinity entered into to fulfil their distinct parts and offices in the covenant of grace; and they entered into this obligation for the sake of those who should flee to Christ for refuge, that they might see the immutability of God's counsel to save them; because he had confirmed it by an oath, and had thereby given them two immutable things to rely upon. The apostle has reasoned thus upon the subject: "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself; for men verily swear by the greater: and an oath, for confirmation, is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that, by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." In which words we have a clear account of the nature of the oath, "God sware by himself," and of the persons for whose sakes he sware, namely, the heirs of promise, and the design of his swearing, namely, to put an end to all strife in their consciences concerning his faithfulness to fulfil his promises to them. And the apostle's argument stands thus: when there is any dispute or strife among men, and the

matter comes to be tried in a court of justice, the cause is finally determined by examining the parties and their witnesses upon oath. And there being a strife between God and sinners, on his part he proclaims his grace, promising them full pardon, if they seek it through Christ, binds himself to give it, by his word, and confirms his word by his oath. And ought not this oath, for confirmation of the word of promise, to put an end to all strife in the sinner's conscience? For how can God's oath be broken? Here are two immutable things, which cannot possibly fail—the counsel of God to save the heirs of promise, and the oath of God to carry his counsel into execution. His counsel is what he decreed in the covenant of grace, when all his attributes determined to bring many sons unto glory by Jesus Christ. This divine counsel, revealed to his creatures in his word, was sufficient evidence, and ought to induce them to believe; but he was "willing more abundantly," more than was needful, if they had not been very faithless and unbelieving, to convince them, and therefore confirmed his counsel by an oath; so that here are two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, and which consequently ought to make the faith of the heirs of promise immutable. The foundation upon which faith stands can never fail. It relies upon the unchangeable word of promise, and the promise is confirmed by the counsel of God; of which he says himself, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa. xlvi. 10. "Yea, the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations," Psal. xxxiii. 11; and the promise is also confirmed by the oath of God, which is immutable and cannot be broken: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent." He will not repent of his oath, unless he could cease to be wise, or could be perjured, which to suppose possible, would be the highest blasphemy. Oh! what full security, then, has a gracious God given to the heirs of promise? He would not have them to doubt of his love, or of his power to save them, and therefore he condescends to give them two immutable things for the support of their faith: but knowing whereof they were made, and how slow of heart they were to believe, he has been pleased to exalt his free and sovereign grace by giving them a

Third immutable thing, to enable them to rely still more steadfastly upon his promises; and that is the unchangeable covenant. The ever-blessed Trinity, moved by mere love and rich mercy, contrived the gracious plan of the sinner's redemption; and each person was to get himself glory by sustaining a distinct office in the economy of the covenant. The Father was to glorify the truth, justice, and holiness of the Godhead, by demanding full satisfaction for sin. The Son covenanted to pay it, and to glorify the wisdom and love of the Godhead by satisfying all the demands of law and justice. And the Holy Spirit was to glorify the power and grace of the Godhead by raising the dead in sin to life, and quickening them together with Christ, and then enabling them to walk against all opposition in his steps and after his example, until they attain eternal life. This is the covenant of promise. And what could induce the holy Trinity to make it? What, but the divine love and mercy? And what can hinder the fulfilling of this covenant? Can any thing resist and defeat the will of the Almighty? No. His power will carry his will into execution. But may not the will of God change? That is impossible. The covenant is everlasting: and how, then, can it change? Though it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto; and since a human covenant is not liable to change, certainly the everlasting covenant is alike ordered in all things, and sure: for he that cannot lie, hath said, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth," Psal. lxxxix. 34. It cannot be broken; it cannot alter; and how then can one tittle of it ever change or fail? All things else shall pass away: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee," Isa. liv. 10.

This is the security which God hath vouchsafed to give for the fulfilling of his promises, and it is the most full and complete evidence that any promise can have: and what, then, can the heirs of promise desire more? Has not God been

willing more abundantly to show them the immutability of his counsel? For he has given them his word to rely upon, which cannot be broken; his oath, of which he will not repent; and his covenant, which he will not break or alter. It is impossible any of these securities should fail, and why, then, should unbelieving doubts arise in their minds, and tempt them to think they could fail? My brethren, if you give way to those doubts, they will soon rob you of your peace and comfort: for although you be heirs to a great estate, yet it is chiefly in reversion. You have very little in possession at present but the promises. You are heirs of promise: and if you lose your reliance upon the promises, you lose sight of the evidence of your estate, and the comfortable hope of your inheriting it. Oh! remember then how dishonourable this is to God, after he has provided such immutable things for faith and hope to rest upon, and how hurtful this is to your own interest; and therefore, whenever doubts and fears begin to tempt you, ask yourself, "What am I going to do? Shall I fancy that God can lie, or be perjured, or be a covenant-breaker? Would not this be blaspheming his word, and his oath, and his covenant? O Lord, keep thy servant from this great wickedness, and strengthen my faith, that it fail not!" And if you thus go to the throne of grace for help, you shall find it in time of need. God will enable you not to stagger at his promises through unbelief, but will make you strong in faith, relying steadfastly upon his fulfilling them all to your souls.

Some persons, perhaps, may be thinking, "God has provided full and complete evidence for the certainty of his fulfilling his promises; and I think I could rest upon this security, if I did but know that I was an heir of promise." Rely upon the promise, and it is yours. Live upon it, and you are undoubtedly an heir of promise. But this point comes to be more particularly considered under the scripture character of the persons to whom the promises belong, which is the

Second general head of my discourse. When our Lord gave his apostles a commission to preach, it was in these words: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The gospel brings the glad tidings of the covenant of promise made in Christ, and full security for all the promised blessings of the covenant. You have the gracious call this day. In my master's name I stand up, and invite every unpardoned sinner to come and receive of him free mercy and forgiveness. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come." Ho! every one that thirsteth for redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, come to the blood of sprinkling, that you may be made clean from all your sins. And if you find it in your hearts to accept of this free invitation, let not the sense of your unworthiness keep you back. Jesus is able to save you, be ye ever so unworthy; for he can save to the uttermost. All is finished on his part. He is able; he is also willing; and he engages to use his almighty power for you, if you ask it. He freely calls you, without money and without price, to take pardon, righteousness, holiness, glory. He promises them in his word, binds it by oath, and confirms it by covenant. All he has of blessedness and glory to give his people shall be yours, if you will accept his call, and rely upon his promise.

But you are thinking still with yourselves, the promises are indeed freely offered to all, but they belong to none, except to the heirs of promise. That is very true; and therefore it concerns you to be assured that you are an heir of promise. Do you desire to be so? Would you willingly be an heir to the unsearchable riches of grace and glory? Oh! say you, from my heart I desire it: what would not I give to know that the exceeding great and precious promises in scripture belong to me! But how came this desire into your heart? Was it from any uneasiness in your mind about your sins? Have you been awakened to see that all the threatenings of the law belong to you, and that you have an interest in none of the promises of the gospel? and was it from hence that you waited upon God for mercy, desiring to experience his promised grace and salvation? And are you now waiting, deeply humbled under a sense of your sinfulness and helplessness? If this be your case, thus far you are right; for this is the first work of God's Spirit upon all the heirs of promise. He begins with convincing them of sin. They are lying in the same mass of corruption with other men, under the law, under guilt for breaking it, subject to death and hell.

The Holy Spirit makes them sensible of their being in this state, and apprehensive of their danger, and puts them upon seeking deliverance. They seek, but cannot find, for want of faith. They hear and read in scripture of the love and power of Christ to save such sinners as they are; but they have no faith to rely upon the promises. This is not a comfortable state; but it is the way to get comfort: for none will ever ask faith of God, whose gift it is, until they know the want of it, and therefore the Holy Spirit convinces all the heirs of promise that they have no faith, and they find that without faith they cannot take comfort in any of the precious promises: upon which they look up to him, who, by his mighty operation, is alone able to work faith in the heart. And let every one of you, who are thus waiting upon God, seek, and you shall find. He that put the desire into your heart, will give you possession of the blessing desired. The Spirit of God will enable you to rely upon the word of promise, and to apply it to your own soul, and thereby he will speak peace and comfort to your conscience. And by acting faith thus upon the word, you will be brought to the knowledge of your union with Christ. United to him by the bond of the Spirit on his part, and by faith on yours, you will be a member of his mystical body, and will derive influence and nourishment from him for the growth of your spiritual life. And being thus one with Christ, and Christ with you, you will have an interest in all that he has. His grace shall be yours, his Spirit yours, and all his promises shall be yours; for all things shall be yours, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all shall be yours, because ye are Christ's.

This is the experience of every heir of promise. The Spirit of God has convinced him of his sinfulness and of his misery. He has been brought to see his lost and helpless state; and in his guilty conscience he was self-condemned, finding himself to be a child of wrath, and an inheritor of everlasting torments. After the Holy Spirit had thus humbled him, he discovered to him the excellency of the Lord Christ, the infinite dignity of his person, and the infinite perfection of his righteousness; and then, by the grace of the same good Spirit, he was led to rely upon Christ for salvation, and to trust the word of promise, which engages to give free and full and eternal salvation to every one who believeth in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And after the Holy Spirit has enabled the soul to believe, and to rely upon the word of God, he carries on his work, until faith be grown exceedingly, even up to full assurance. This the scripture calls the seal of the Spirit, which he sets upon all the heirs of promise. Sealing comes from believing, and is a fresh evidence in confirmation of it. "After that ye believed," says the apostle, "ye were sealed with the Spirit of promise." First, he enables the soul to rest upon the promise, and to apply it in this manner—He that believeth shall be saved: I believe therefore I shall be saved: and then he confirms this with his own testimony, and seals it to the heart; so that the sealing is for the believer's assurance, and not for God's. The Lord knoweth them that are his: their names are written in his book. He knoweth their weakness, and how to strengthen them with might in the inner man. And when temptations are strong, and trials great, then the Holy Spirit commonly strengthens faith with his inward witness. He honours faith with his own seal, bearing testimony with the believer's spirit, that he is a child of God. Every child of God has this seal set upon him some time or other. When it is most for his advantage, and most for God's glory, then the Spirit gives him this earnest of his inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.

But perhaps some person may inquire, How shall I know that I am sealed by the Spirit of God? You may know it by these scripture marks. First, have you been deeply convinced of sin, and of Christ's power to save you from sin? Have you been convinced of your damnable estate without faith, and have you been asking faith of God? And has he enabled you to rely upon the word of promise, which offers you free and full salvation? and are you verily persuaded that God cannot break his word to you, who are relying upon it? And have you been waiting for the seal of the Spirit, hoping he would give you the inward witness of your adoption? All this is right. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, by which he puts his seal upon the heir of promise; and if this be your experience,

you need not doubt but the witness is from heaven, when the Spirit of God beareth testimony with your spirits, that ye are the children of God: for, secondly, in the act of bearing witness with your spirits, he will give sufficient evidence that it is his testimony, both for his own glory, and for the assurance of your faith. He comes to bear witness to a matter of fact, that there may be no more doubt concerning it in the court of the believer's conscience. The fact is this—"Thou art now a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus." He seals this testimony upon the heart with his own seal, that it may be authentic and lasting, and then doubts and fears vanish, conscience is assured that all enmity is now slain, and that God is a loving reconciled Father; upon which the soul is led out into acts of praise and thankfulness, and with a holy triumph can say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

But some may think it is an easy matter to be deluded in this case. No; there will be no room for delusion, if your experience, by the testimony of the Spirit, was such as I have been mentioning, and if you attend, thirdly, to what follows after it. Does the witness abide? Is conscience at peace? Is your heart grateful? Is your faith lively and active? Not, perhaps, in so high a degree as when the Spirit did bear his testimony, but still in some good degree. In this case there can be no delusion; because that which has thus drawn your heart up to God, did certainly come from God. If the seal had not been from the Holy Spirit, how could this fruit of the Spirit have been produced? The impression which is left demonstrates that it was made by a divine hand; for when the Holy Spirit seals the soul, he not only seals it for Christ's property, but he also stamps the image and likeness of Christ upon it, which appears outwardly by its love to Christ, and by the acts of love. The soul is in love with the person, and with the offices and excellencies of Christ, and evidences this love by its love to his life and to his example, following and pressing close after them, and by its love to his graces, desiring strength from God so to walk even as Christ walked. This constant love to Christ proves the soul to be sealed by his Spirit, and the person thus sealed to be an heir of promise: for now he lives by faith upon Christ, and believes that all the promises made in Christ shall be made good to him. He has the earnest of their completion in his heart, and he has some of them fulfilled to him every day for a daily pledge of the perfect completion of the rest.

This is the character of the heirs of promise: and if any of you are thinking with yourselves, some part of this character is agreeable to our experience, but not the whole of it, and therefore we doubt whether we are heirs of promise or not: you should remember that the heirs of promise grow up to this character by several steps and degrees; and if any part of it be yours, you ought to press on to the attainment of the other parts. The fathers in Christ were once babes in Christ. The Spirit begins his work with conviction of sin, which is necessary to put the sinner upon seeking the promised mercies of the Gospel. If you are seeking, that is another step towards your reliance upon God's word, and believing him faithful to fulfil his promises to your soul. And if you can rely upon his word, you have advanced one step farther towards the assurance of faith and the seal of the Spirit. So that if any part of this character be yours, doubt not but the rest will be yours also; only press you on to the attainment of what is yet before. Let what has been done in you encourage you to proceed. You have some evidences of your inheritance; endeavour to get more, looking up to him who has begun, and praying him to carry on his own work, and fear not but you shall be brought to know that Christ is yours, and that all the promises made through him are yours also. And may this consideration stir you up to press forward, that what you are seeking is of inestimable value, and the happy possession of it will be eternal. When you are once heirs of promise, you will be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, born to inherit the riches of grace, and the riches of glory. All the blessedness which God has promised to give his children in time and in eternity is yours. You are heirs to the exceeding great and precious promises; and this brings me to the

Third general head of discourse, under which I was to treat of their exceeding greatness and preciousness. They are great in quantity, containing the greatest

blessings which God has to give; yea, exceeding great beyond all description; and they are as good as great, they are exceeding precious, containing every thing truly valuable in earth or heaven. The greatness of the promises might be proved from many considerations. I shall mention at present but three or four. And the

First, is the state from which the promises offer to save man. He is fallen into a most miserable and helpless bondage, and to the worst of enemies; and none but an almighty arm can deliver him. Before the promise is brought to him, he is a transgressor of the law, under the curses of it, liable to be cut off every moment, and to suffer them in everlasting torments. And when justice comes to inflict the curses of the law upon him, what satisfaction can he make? What has he to plead, why sentence should not be immediately executed? He is silent. His mouth is stopped. He is self-condemned, and owns the sentence to be just, which assigns him over to the tormentors, to suffer with them the vengeance of eternal fire. This is the desert of every son and daughter of fallen Adam. Sin has made them subject to all this misery, and has left them totally helpless; they can no more save themselves from the second death than they can from the first. While the long-suffering of God bears with them in this mortal life he sends them his promises; in which he offers to save them from guilt and misery, to cleanse them from the pollutions, and to heal them of the wounds of sin. And are not these great promises, which engage to see such an almighty work performed? Surely they are exceeding great, since it requires the arm of the Lord God omnipotent to fulfil them by saving poor, guilty, helpless man from sin and Satan, from death and hell. Must not that be an exceeding great promise, which engages to save man from exceeding great misery? And this greatness appears evidently, in the

2. Next place, from what the promises offer to bestow upon the sinner. They not only engage to save him from all evil, but also to bestow upon him all good. They offer him a free pardon, that his sins may be forgiven, and he may be justified by faith, and reconciled to God, and may have the love of God shed abroad in his heart, and may walk, as an adopted son of God, worthy of his high calling unto all well-pleasing. And in this holy walking heavenwards, the Lord promises him every grace and blessing which shall be needful for him; yea, he has engaged to make all things—sickness, reproach, persecution, trials, and troubles of every kind—work together for his good. Are not these great promises, which engage to bestow pardon, justification, peace with God, adoption, sanctification, and grace to profit under every dispensation of providence; yea, are not these exceeding great promises, which bestow upon the sinner such exceeding great blessings? And bestow them upon him,

3. Upon the greatest motive that possibly can be, even the free grace of God. Deliverance from the evils of sin, and the bestowing of the blessings of salvation, is all of grace, proceeding wholly from the unmerited love and mercy of God. He is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth. All creatures are his, bound to obey his holy will, and, in case of disobedience, bound to suffer the threatened punishment; and when man had disobeyed, he had a right to nothing but punishment; and if it was remitted, yea, but for a day, this was an act of grace; but how much greater an act was it to pardon the sinner, to put honour upon him, and to restore him to a better state than he was in before he fell. If a friend bestow upon you a free gift, you acknowledge yourselves to be under a greater obligation than if he were to pay you the same sum for a just debt. How much, then, are you indebted to God? For he had no motive, but mere love, to induce him to make you any promise. Consider this motive; consider the promises; consider from what a state of misery to what a state of happiness God offers to raise you; and then admire and praise the greatness of that love which led God to make you such great promises. Well might the apostle call upon us to behold what manner of love it is: for it passeth knowledge, it is so exceeding great. The blessings which his free grace has promised surpass all understanding. Even the souls of just men made perfect, who are now inheriting the promises, cannot adequately set forth the greatness of them; for they are eternal. And this is another—

4. Consideration, which exalts the greatness of the promises. They are of everlasting duration, and can never fail. When nature itself shall be dissolved, and heaven and earth shall pass away, then the promises shall be established. Not a tittle of them shall suffer in the universal conflagration; but they shall be then in their full extent most gloriously fulfilled. Many of them are reserved for the wonders of that great day. The raising of the body, free from corruption and mortality, admitting it to the vision of God, putting upon it and the soul never-fading glory, a crown of righteousness, and palms of victory; and then bringing them to drink of those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore; these are some of the exceeding great promises which are to be completed at the Lord's coming to judgment. In that day the redeemed of the Lord will find that his divine power will fulfil the greatest of his promises. When the captain of their salvation has brought them to the heavenly Canaan, the promised land of everlasting rest, then he will put them into the actual possession of all the promises. Like as Joshua, when he had brought the people into the promised land, called upon them to be witnesses for God, that every promise had been fulfilled to them, so may our almighty Joshua say to his redeemed people in the same words, "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof," Josh. xxiii. 14.

Let these considerations suffice to set forth the greatness of the promises. They are exceeding great in offering to deliver us from all evil, and to bestow upon us all good; the motive for doing this is the infinite love and sovereign grace of God, which advances the greatness of the promise by the freeness of it, and still further advances it by what grace has promised to do for us in glory, even to give us the actual possession and eternal enjoyment of all the promises.

And are these things so? If they be, who then would not wish to be an heir of promise? Are the promises thus exceeding great? Why then do they not appear so to every one of us? What is the reason that the generality of men had rather be heirs to any other estate than to the promises? The text tells us the true cause; they know not the preciousness of them. They are exceeding great in themselves, but they are not apprehended to be so without faith. As the apostle says of Christ, "to them that believe he is precious;" so we may say of the promises, to them that believe they are precious; and therefore their greatness doth not strike any man until he by faith tastes something of their preciousness. Christ is the sum and substance of all the promises. Christ himself is the first promise, and all the rest are branches from that radical promise. They are all made in Christ, and in him they are all completed. God has no good to give to sinners, but in relation to Christ, and all the promises of good are made in him, in consequence of his meritorious life and death, his resurrection and ascension, yea, the Spirit of promise is given as the blessed fruit of Christ's intercession. Now no man sees any thing precious in Christ without faith; so neither without it does he see any thing precious in the promises. Christ has no form or comeliness that he should desire him, and the promises have no such charms as to persuade him to live upon them. But faith gives a substance, a substantial presence to the things hoped for in the promises, and gives evidence of the believer's interest in the things not seen by the bodily eyes, and thus it enables the soul to experience the reality, and to find something of the value of the good things contained in the promises.

Perhaps you may be convinced of the necessity of faith to discover the preciousness of the promises, but you do not clearly understand how faith acts upon them when it first discovers and afterwards lives upon their preciousness. The word of promise is the established means in the hand of the Spirit of begetting faith, and of strengthening it: for a sinner can expect no good from God, unless he vouchsafe to give him a free promise. The scripture is a revelation of God's will, in which he engages, for Christ's sake, to bestow graces and blessings upon his children; but the unawakened sinner sees no want of those graces and blessings until the Holy Spirit convince him of sin, stir up guilt in his conscience, and make him sensible of his danger. Then he is glad to hear of a promise, and is

asking, Who will show me any good? The Lord God sends him the gospel with a free title to all good, and out of his infinite grace to enrich him with the unsearchable riches of Christ. The Holy Spirit enables him to receive the gospel, and to rely and to act faith upon the word of promise. Faith looks at the word, sees what God has promised therein, rests and stays upon him for the fulfilling of it, and by this dependence and reliance upon the word of promise the believer calls upon and engages the divine power to fulfil it. And the fulfilling of it gives it a peculiar sweetness and preciousness to the believer's soul. Every fresh proof of God's faithfulness to fulfil it strengthens the believer's reliance and dependence upon it, and thereby it grows more precious to all the faculties of his soul. The understanding sees and acknowledges the promises to be important realities; the will chooses them for its inheritance; and the affections love them and live upon them. Thus they become more and more precious. Tried promises are precious promises. Every time the believer goes boldly to the throne of grace, and asks, through Christ, the fulfilling of any promise, and receives it, then his faith grows, and as his faith grows exceedingly, so the promises grow exceedingly precious.

But all our experience here is only an earnest and foretaste of their future preciousness. The chief part of them is to be fulfilled beyond the grave, and many of them at the last day; and even then there will be no adequate description of their preciousness. The saints in glory will be able only to set forth half their praise, the promises being still completing through the endless ages of eternity, so that it will require an eternity to show forth all their praise. May it be your happiness, my brethren, now to experience, by faith, the greatness and preciousness of the promises, and to have reason daily to praise him, in whom they are made, and by whom they will be all made good for ever and ever. Such are the promises They are exceeding great and precious. They are certainly so in themselves, but do they, my brethren, appear so to you at present? If they do not, consider a little what your state is before you are interested in the promises. You are transgressors of that law, which has decreed, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Under this sentence you live, subject to whatever is meant by the soul's dying from God. You are liable to the wrath and justice of the Almighty, and to those eternal torments which he has threatened to inflict upon sinners; and was it not for his long-suffering, which of you would have been spared to this hour? And while the long-suffering of God is waiting, he sends his ministers with the glad tidings of the gospel to call you to a free pardon. They invite you in Christ's name, and in Christ's words. They assure you of his readiness to receive you into his favour, and to forgive, and to forget all your offences. For your encouragement, they relate unto you his promises, which cannot be broken. They earnestly press you to accept of them, and to be happy in the enjoyment of them. But in vain. Their message is ineffectual. You had rather have the realities of sin, than the earnests of the promises. And what is this but absolute infidelity? For if you knew what sin is, and believed the divine promises to be so great and precious as they are, you would certainly prefer them to the delights of sin; whereas you neither believe the word, nor the oath, nor the covenant of God; which is really practical atheism; for you are without Christ; you are strangers from the covenant of promise; you have no hope; and you are without God, atheists in the world. You may not, perhaps, deny the being of God; but you live without Christ, and without God in the world; and therefore you are practical atheists. While you are in this state, you cannot possibly have any true happiness; not in time, because your sins are unpardoned; not in eternity, because then you will receive the punishment of unpardoned sin. And is this a true description of your guilt and of your danger? You know it is; the word of God will not suffer you to doubt of it, unless you deny its authority. And how then do you determine to act? What! will you still seek your happiness in the ways of sin? God forbid. Turn ye, turn ye unto the Lord; certainly he bids higher for your hearts than Satan can. His promises are greater than sin, or the world, can make. You know they are. And still his promises follow you, although you have often turned a deaf ear to them. Once more I call and in-

vite you in his name. Oh that he would speak to your hearts, and call effectually. My brethren, ye are sinners; God offers you pardon. You are guilty; he offers you free justification. He promises you his Son to be your Saviour, his Spirit to be your sanctifier, his grace to be your strength, his glory to be your eternal inheritance. He opens his treasury, and invites you to come, and to receive freely of him unsearchable and inestimable riches. Come, then, at the invitation of this gracious God, and hearken no longer to the lying promises of sin. If the Lord has now put it into your hearts to seek the fulfilling of the great things, which he has engaged to give his people, may he enable you to seek until you find him faithful and just to fulfil all his promises!

2. There are many of you seeking and waiting for the fulfilling of them. You are convinced of the sinfulness of your hearts and lives, and are humbled under a sense of your vileness and helplessness, and you find the necessity of being saved from your sins, but you cannot rely with such confidence upon the word of God, as to believe that you shall be heirs of promise. But why not? To whom are the promises made? Are they not made to sinners? and are they not discoveries of God's gracious intentions towards them in the Son of his love? And since you are sinners, convinced of sin, and waiting for mercy, surely the promises are made to you, and by relying on them they are yours.

But you are afraid to rely upon them. What! are you afraid God will break his promise? Consider what has been before said of the security which God has vouchsafed to give you, in order to silence your doubts and fears, and to put an end to all strife in your consciences. He has given you his word, and his oath, and his covenant. These are immutable things; and why, then, should you fear to rely upon those things which cannot possibly change or fail?

Perhaps you believe that the promises are immutable, and yet you are afraid to rely upon them, because of the greatness of your sins. The greatness of your sins should humble you, but not drive you to despair: for are there not great promises for great sinners? yea, exceeding great promises for exceeding great sinners? Is it not written, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool?"

But still you are afraid to rely upon the promises because you have got such a wicked heart: you think there is not any person in the world, whose heart is so wholly set in them to do evil, as yours is Be it desperately wicked, yet can you desire God to create in you a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within you? If you can, then hear what he has promised: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

Why then do you stagger at the promises of God through unbelief? Are you complaining of your corruptions, and are they so many and strong, that they tempt you to think there is no mercy for you? Bring them to the blood of sprinkling, and when you are cleansed from the guilt of sin, the Lord has promised that his grace shall be sufficient for you, and that sin shall not have dominion over you. Your corruptions, be they ever so many, or ever so strong, shall be subdued by his almighty grace.

What, then, still hinders you from relying on God's promises? Can they ever fail? No. On God's part all is fixed and immutable; and whatever it be, on your part, which makes you stagger at the promises, has itself a promise, that you shall be delivered from it; which renders your unbelief more inexcusable. Whatever sin it be, or guilt, or corruption, or misery, the Lord has promised you salvation from it. He will redeem you from all evil; from all the evil of sin, and from all the evil of punishment. He has given his word, and his word cannot be broken. And why, then, cannot you rely upon it, especially since God has promised to deliver you from that very thing which hinders your reliance upon his word? Is this, indeed, the case? And are you convinced of it? Why, then, do you make God a liar, by not believing the record which he hath given of his Son? Oh! beg of him to enable you to give glory to his word of promise by relying upon it, and by setting to your seal, that God is true; and then God will set to his seal, and the Spirit of promise will seal you to the day of redemption.

3. Blessed be his rich grace and love, who is daily fulfilling his promises. Many of you have had happy experience of his faithfulness to fulfil them. You ought always to remember, my Christian friends and brethren, that whatever you enjoy of grace, or hope for in glory, is freely promised and freely given you in Jesus Christ; and let your gratitude bear some proportion to his mercies. He has opened the treasury of his promises, and has put you in possession of his unsearchable riches. Oh, what manner of love is this, that he should raise you from the lowest beggary, to such an exceeding great and precious inheritance! Every promise made to you in this life is a bank-note of heaven; and when you go to the throne of grace to demand the payment of it, he cannot send you away with a denial. If you plead the promise, and desire the fulfilling of it in the name of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he cannot deny the word that is gone out of his mouth. His divine power will give you all things that pertain to life and godliness. For when he gave you Christ, with him he gave you all things. In Christ there is all that you can want treasured up for you: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. There is a fulness of wisdom to teach you the true nature of the promises, and a fulness of salvation to deliver you from every thing that hindered your relying upon them, and a fulness of power to put you into the eternal possession of them all. Having, then, these promises, dearly beloved, let us live upon them, and we shall thereby live to his glory, in whom they are all made. Let us beg of him to act as our prophet for the enlightening of our understandings, that we may see the great promises made through him, and as our priest, to pardon and to forgive us our sins, that we may have by faith the earnest of our inheriting the promises, and as our king to rule in us and over us, until he bring us safe to the promised inheritance. In these three offices, Christ has engaged to act for his people here below. He was to be their wisdom, their righteousness, and their sanctification; and they find him faithful to fulfil his offices, and to perform his promises. And this experience keeps their minds stayed upon him for the performance of what remains as yet unaccomplished. They have no reason to doubt of his love: for they continually find his power exerted in their behalf. Happy men, who have the Lord for their God, a faithful promise-keeping God, who will be their God for ever and ever. His covenant mercies shall never fail. They shall be receiving their perfect accomplishment hereafter, when time shall be no more. May he, in whom they are all made, and in whom they are all established, now get himself glory by enabling every one of us to rely upon his promises; and may we at this time find the promise, which he has made to us while we are here gathered together, fulfilled to us all! He has said, "Wherever two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of you." Oh that we may all find his spiritual presence! If there be any poor deluded worldlings here, who had rather have the possession of this world's goods than the riches of the promises, may the Lord convince them this day of their guilt and of their danger, and put them upon seeking the promised mercies of the gospel. And may he be graciously pleased to vouchsafe his presence to those who are seeking him, that they may no more by their unbelief dishonour his word, and his oath, and his covenant. Put an end, blessed Lord, to all strife in their consciences, that they may no longer stagger at thy promises. Enable them to believe to the saving of their souls, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ may be given to them that believe. And accept of thanks and praises from thy redeemed people. Oh! make us more thankful for thy great and precious promises, and for faith to apply them, and to live upon them. May they grow more precious to us every day. Fulfil, Lord Jesus, what remains, that we may be receiving continually, out of thy fulness, strength of faith, increase of grace, power over sin; and may at last be more than conquerors, through him that loved us. Hear us; for we ask those things according to thy promise, and grant us them for thy great name's sake, to the honour of the Father and of the eternal Spirit, the holy, blessed and glorious Trinity in one Jehovah; to whom be equal honour and glory, and blessing and praise, in earth and heaven, in time and in eternity. *Amen* and *Amen.*

A TREATISE

ON

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

PREFACE.

THE design of this little treatise is to display the glory and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to encourage weak believers to glorify him more by depending and living more upon his all-sufficiency. Whatever grace he has promised in his word, he is faithful and he is almighty to bestow; and they may receive it of him freely by the hand of faith. This is its use and office, as a hand or instrument, having first received Christ, to be continually receiving out of Christ's fulness. The apostle calls this *living by faith;* a life received and continued, with all the strength, comforts, and blessings belonging to it, by faith in the Son of God; and he also mentions the work of faith, its working effectually in the hearts and lives of believers, through Christ strengthening them, and its growing in them, yea, growing exceedingly from faith to faith, by the power of him who loveth them. This is the subject; and it properly belongs to those only who have obtained the true faith, given them of God, and wrought in their hearts by his word and Spirit. Such persons meet with many difficulties every day to try their faith, and to hinder them from depending continually upon the Lord Christ for all things belonging to life and godliness. By what means these difficulties may be overcome, is plainly taught in scripture, is clearly promised, and is attained by faith, which becomes daily more victorious, as it is enabled to trust that he is faithful who promised. The strengthening of it I have had all along in view, hoping to be the means, under God, of leading the weak believer by the hand, and of removing hinderances out of his way, until the Lord thoroughly settle and establish him in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

But I must admonish the reader, that I do not expect this merely from what I have written. It is too high and great a work for any mere man. Faith is the gift of God; and he alone who gives it can increase it. The author of the faith is also the finisher of it; and we do not use the means to set the Lord of all means aside. No. We use them, that we may find him in them. It is his presence which makes the use of them effectual. By this, and this only, can any reader of this book be rendered stronger in faith. Being well assured of this, I have therefore looked up to him myself, and it will be for thy profit, also, reader, to look up to him, in prayer, for his blessing. Entreat him of his grace to countenance this feeble attempt to promote his glory and his people's good. Beg of him to make thy reading of it the means of thy growth in faith, and to accompany it with the supply of his Holy Spirit to every believer into whose hands it may fall. And forget not in thy prayers and praises to remember the author.

I bless God, who has enabled me to revise the press, and to put my last hand to the work, by making such additions and alterations as seemed to me necessary to render the subject more plain to common readers. In this and in all things, I desire to approve myself to my Lord and Master, whose I am, and whom I serve; and whatever good I have or do, to him be all the praise. Blessed be his name this day, henceforth, and through the day of eternity!

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

The just shall live by his faith.—Hab. ii. 4.

The persons for whose use this little tract is drawn up are supposed to be practically acquainted with these following truths: they have been convinced of sin, and convinced of righteousness. The word of God has been made effectual by the application of the Holy Spirit to teach them the nature of the divine law; and upon comparing their hearts and their lives with it, they have been brought in guilty. They found themselves fallen creatures, and they felt the sad consequences of the fall; namely, total ignorance in the understanding of God and his ways; an open rebellion against him in the will; and an entire enmity in the heart; a life spent in the services of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and, on all these accounts, guilty before God, and by nature children of wrath. When they were convinced of those truths in their judgments, and the awakened conscience sought for ease and deliverance, then they found they were helpless and without strength. They could take no step, nor do any thing which could in the least save them from their sins. Whatever method they thought of, it failed them upon trial, and left conscience more uneasy than before. Did they purpose to repent? They found such a repentance as God would be pleased with was the gift of Christ. He was exalted to be a prince and a Saviour to give repentance. Suppose they thought of reforming their lives; yet what is to become of their old sins? Will present obedience, if it could be perfectly paid, make any atonement for past disobedience? Will the broken law take part of our duty for the whole? No. It has determined that whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. And let him be ever so careful in doing what the law requires, or in avoiding what the law forbids; let him fast and pray and give alms, hear and read the word, be early and late at ordinances; yet the enlightened conscience cannot be herewith satisfied; because by these duties he cannot undo the sin committed and because he will find so many failings in them, that they will be still adding to his guilt and increasing his misery.

What method, then, shall he take? The more he strives to make himself better, the worse he finds himself. He sees the pollution of sin greater: he discovers more of its guilt: he finds in himself a want of all good, and an inclination to all evil: he is now convinced that the law is holy, just, and good; but when he would keep it, evil is present with him. This makes him deeply sensible of his guilty, helpless state, and shows him that by the works of the law he cannot be saved. His heart, like a fountain, is continually sending forth evil thoughts; yea, the very imaginations of it are only and altogether evil, and words and works partake of the nature of that evil fountain from whence they flow: so that after all his efforts he cannot quiet his conscience nor attain peace with God.

The law having done its office, as a schoolmaster, by convincing him of these truths, stops his mouth, that he has not a word to say why sentence should not be passed upon him. And there it leaves him, guilty and helpless. It can do nothing more for him than show him that he is a child of wrath, and that he deserves to have the wrath of God abiding upon him for ever; for by the law is the knowledge of sin

The gospel finds him in this condition, as the good Samaritan did the wounded traveller, and brings him good news. It discovers to him the way of salvation contrived in the covenant of grace, and manifests to him what the ever-blessed Trinity had therein purposed, and what in the fulness of time was accomplished. That all the perfections of the Godhead might be infinitely and everlastingly glorified, the Father covenanted to gain honour and dignity to his law and justice, to his faithfulness and holiness, by insisting upon man's appearing at his bar in the perfect righteousness of the law: but man having no such righteousness of his own, all having sinned, and there being none righteous—no, not one—how can he be saved? The Lord Christ, a person in the Godhead coequal and co-

eternal with the Father, undertook to be his Saviour. He covenanted to stand up as the head and surety of his people in their nature, and, in their stead, to obey for them, that by his infinitely precious obedience many might be made righteous, and to suffer for them, that by his everlasting meritorious stripes they might be healed. Accordingly, in the fulness of time he came into the world, and was made flesh, and God and man being as truly united in one person, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man. This adorable person lived, and suffered, and died, as the representative of his people. The righteousness of his life was to be their right and title to life, and the righteousness of his sufferings and death was to save them from all the sufferings due to their sins. And thus the law and justice of the Father would be glorified in pardoning them, and his faithfulness and holiness made honourable in saving them. He might be strictly just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

In this covenant the Holy Spirit, a person coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son, undertook the gracious office of quickening and convincing sinners in their consciences, how guilty they were, and how much they wanted a Saviour, and in their judgments how able he was to save all that come unto God through him, and in their hearts to receive him, and to believe unto righteousness, and then in their walk and conversation to live upon his grace and strength. His office is thus described by our blessed Lord in John xvi. 13, 14: "When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you;" that is, when he comes to convince sinners of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, he takes of the things of Christ, and glorifies him by showing them what a fulness there is in him to save. He leads them into all necessary truth in their judgments, both concerning their own sinfulness, guilt, and helplessness, and also concerning the almighty power of the God-man, and his lawful authority to make use of it for their salvation. He opens their understandings to comprehend the covenant of grace, and the offices of the eternal Trinity in this covenant, particularly the office of the sinner's surety, the Lord Christ; and he convinces them that there is righteousness and strength, comfort and rejoicing, grace for grace, holiness and glory, yea, treasures infinite, everlasting treasures of these in Christ, and hereby he draws out their affections after Christ, and enables them with the heart to believe in him unto righteousness. And the Holy Spirit having thus brought them to the happy knowledge of their union with Christ, afterwards glorifies him in their walk and conversation, by teaching them how to live by faith upon his fulness, and to be continually receiving out of it grace for grace, according to their continual needs.

The corruption of our nature by the fall, and our recovery through Jesus Christ, are the two leading truths in the Christian religion; and I suppose the persons for whose sake this little tract is drawn up, not only to know them, but also to be established in them, steadfastly to believe and deeply to experience them. The necessity of their being well grounded in them is very evident; for a sinner will never seek after nor desire Christ further than he feels his guilt and his misery; nor will he receive Christ by faith, till all other methods of saving himself fail; nor will he live upon Christ's fulness further than he has an abiding sense of his own want of him. Reader! How do these truths appear to thee? Has the law of God arraigned thee in thy conscience? Hast thou been there brought in guilty? and has the Spirit of God deeply convinced thee by the law of sin, and of unbelief, and of thy helplessness, so as to leave thee no false resting-place short of Christ? Has he swept away every refuge of lies? and thus put thee upon inquiring what thou must do to be saved. If not, may the Lord the Spirit convince thee, and in his own good time bring thee to the knowledge of thyself, and to the saving knowledge of and belief in Christ Jesus, without which this book can profit thee nothing! But if thou hast been thus convinced, and the Lord has shone into thy understanding, and enlightened it with the knowledge of the way of salvation, then read on. May the Lord make what thou readest profitable to thine establishment in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

There are two things spoken of faith in scripture, which highly deserve the attention of every true believer. The first is the state of safety in which he is placed by Christ, and is delivered from every evil and danger in time and in

eternity, to which sin had justly exposed him; and the second is the happiness of this state, consisting in an abundant supply of all spiritual blessings freely given to him in Christ, and received, as they are wanted, by the hand of faith out of the fulness of Christ: by which means, whoever has obtained this precious faith ought to have a quiet conscience at peace with God, and need not fear any manner of evil, how much soever it be deserved; and thereby he may at all times come boldly to the throne of grace, to receive whatever is necessary for his comfortable walk heavenwards. Every grace, every blessing, promised in scripture, is his, and he may and does enjoy them so far as he lives by faith upon the Son of God: so far his life and conversation are well ordered, and his walk is even, his spiritual enemies are conquered, the old man is mortified with his affections and lusts, and the new man is renewed, day by day, after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. And from what he already enjoys by faith, and from the hopes of a speedy and perfect enjoyment, the scripture warrants him to rejoice in the Lord with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is much to be lamented, that few live up to these two privileges of faith. Many persons, who are truly concerned about the salvation of their souls, live for years together full of doubts and fears, and are not established in the faith that is in Christ Jesus; and several who are in a good measure established, yet do not walk happily in an even course, nor experience the continual blessedness of receiving by faith a supply of every want out of the Saviour's fulness. These things I have long observed; and what I have been taught of them from the scripture, and from the good hand of God upon me, I have put together, and throw it as a mite into the treasury. I am sure it was never more wanted than at present. May the good Lord accept the poor offering, and bless it to the hearts of his dear people, to the praise of the glory of his own grace.

For the clearer understanding of what shall be spoken upon the life of faith, it will be needful to consider, first, what faith is: for a man must have faith before he can make use of it. He must be in Christ before he can live upon Christ. Now, faith signifies the believing the truth of the word of God: so says Christ, "Thy word is truth:" it relates to some word spoken or to some promise made by him, and it expresses the belief which a person who hears it has of its being true. He assents to it, relies upon it, and acts accordingly. This is faith. And the whole word of God, which is the ground of faith, may be reduced to two points, namely, to what the law reveals concerning the justification of a righteous man, and to what the gospel reveals concerning the salvation of a sinner. A short examination of these points will discover to us a great number of persons who have no faith at all in the word of God.

First, Every man in his natural state, before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, has no faith. The scripture says, God hath shut up all that are in this state in unbelief: and when the Holy Spirit awakens any one of them, he convinces him of sin, and of unbelief in particular. When the Comforter is come, says Christ, he shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me.

Secondly, A man who lives careless in sin has no faith. He does not believe one word that God says in his law. Let it warn him of his guilt, and show him his great danger; yet he sets at nought the terrors of the Lord. He acts as if there were no day of judgment, and no place of eternal torments. He has no fear of God before his eyes. How can such a practical atheist as this have any faith?

Thirdly, The formalist has not true faith. He is content with the form of godliness, and denies the power of it. The vail of unbelief is upon his heart, and the pride of his own good works and duties is ever before his eyes, that he finds no want of the salvation of Jesus, and is averse to the grace of the gospel. All his hopes arise from what he is in himself, and from what he is able to do for himself. He neither believes God speaking in the law nor in the gospel. If he believed his word in the law, it would convict him of sin, and forbid him to go about to establish a righteousness of his own; because by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified; yet this he does not believe. If he believed the word of God in the gospel, it would convince him of righteousness, of an infinitely perfect righteousness wrought out by the God-man, Christ Jesus,

and imputed to the sinner without any works of his own: for unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteousness. To this he dare not trust wholly for his acceptance before God; therefore he has not true faith.

Fourthly, A man may be so far enlightened as to understand the way of salvation, and yet have not true faith. This is a possible case. The apostle states it, 1 Cor. xiii. 2: "Though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, yet I may be nothing." And it is a dangerous case, as Heb. x. 26: "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Here was such a knowledge of the truth, as left a man to perish without the benefit of Christ's sacrifice; therefore he wanted that faith, which whosoever hath shall be saved.

What great numbers are there under these delusions! Reader! art thou one of them? Examine closely; for it is of eternal moment. Prove thine own self, whether thou be in the faith. If thou askest how thou shalt know it, since there are so many errors about it; hear what God's word says: Whoever believes truly has been first convinced of unbelief. This our Lord teaches, John xvi. 8, 9: "When the Comforter is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me." He convinces of sin, by enlightening the understanding to know the exceeding sinfulness of it, and by quickening the conscience to feel the guilt of it. He shows the misery threatened, and leaves sinners no false refuge to flee unto. He will not suffer them to sit down content with some sorrow, or a little outward reformation, or any supposed righteousness, but makes them feel that, do whatever they will, or can, still their guilt remains. Thus he puts them upon seeking out for salvation, and by the gospel he discovers it to them. He opens their understandings to know what they hear and read concerning the covenant of the eternal Trinity, and concerning what the God-man has done in the fulfilling of this covenant. The Holy Spirit teaches them the nature of the adorable person of Christ, God manifest in the flesh, and the infinitely precious and everlasting meritorious righteousness which he has wrought out by the obedience of his life and death; and he convinces them that this righteousness is sufficient for their salvation, and that nothing is required, except faith, for its being imputed unto them; and he works in them a sense of their being helpless, and without strength to rely upon this righteousness, and through faith in it to have peace with God. He makes them see that they cannot, by any power of their own, in the least depend upon it: for all their sufficiency is of God. It requires the same arm of the Lord, which wrought out this righteousness, to enable them with the heart to believe in it. They are made clearly sensible of this from the word and Spirit of God, and from their own daily experience, and thereby they are disposed to receive their whole salvation from the free grace of God, and to him to ascribe all the glory of it. These are the redeemed of the Lord, to whom it is given to believe. They are quickened from a death in trespasses and sins; their consciences are awakened; their understandings are enlightened with the knowledge of Christ; they are enabled in their wills to choose him, and in their hearts to love him, and to rejoice in his salvation. This is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit; for faith is his gift, Eph. ii. 8. Unto you it is given, says the apostle, Phil. i. 29, in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him: none can give it but the Spirit of God; because it is the faith of the operation of God, and requires the same almighty power to believe with the heart, as it did to raise Christ's body from the grave, Eph. i. 20. And this power he puts forth in the preaching of the word, and makes it the power of God unto salvation. The word is called, 2 Cor. iii. 8, the ministration of the Spirit, because by it the Spirit ministers his grace and strength. So Gal. iii. 2, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" It was by hearing faith preached, that they received the Spirit: for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, which is therefore called the word of faith. And thus the word is the means, in the hand of the Spirit, to dispose the hearts of those who hear it, to receive and to embrace Christ; whereby they retain the righteousness of faith, as Rom. x. 10: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The heart is the chief thing in be-

lieving; for into it Christ is received, and in it he dwells by faith. The vital union between Christ and the believer is manifested and made known in the heart, and therein it is cemented and established. With joy can the believer say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his;" happy for me, we are but one person in the eye of the law, and our interests are but one. Blessed state this! Christ gives himself freely to the believer, who also gives himself up in faith to Christ; Christ, as the believer's surety, has taken his sins upon himself, and the believer takes Christ's righteousness; for Christ makes over all that he has to the believer, who by faith looks upon it and makes use of it as his own; according to that express warrant for his so doing, in 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. All things are yours, because ye belong to Christ.

This vital union between Christ and the believer is largely treated of in scripture. Christ thus speaks of it in his prayer for his people, John xvii: "I pray for them who shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." And in John vi. 56, he says, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;" and this in-dwelling is by faith, as Eph. iii. 17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." And it is the office of the Holy Spirit to manifest this union to their hearts, as John xiv. 20: "At that day, when the Spirit of truth is come, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." And besides these and many other plain words, this union is also represented by several striking images, such as that of husband and wife, who are, in law, but one person; the husband being answerable for the wife's debts, and the wife sharing in her husband's honours and goods. It is set forth by the union between a building and the foundation upon which it stands secure; between a tree and its branches, which live because they are in the tree, and grow by the sap which they receive from it; between the head and the members, which by holding under the head live and grow, having a supply of nourishment administered to every part. Under these beautiful images the scripture sets forth the reality and the blessed fruits of this union. The Holy Spirit makes it known to the believer by enabling him to rely on God's word as infallible truth, and to receive Christ's person as the almighty Saviour; and he strengthens it by enabling the believer to make use of Christ's fulness, and to live by faith upon him in all his offices, for the partaking of all his promised graces and blessings.

That faith which is of the operation of God always produces the knowledge and the fruits of this blessed union, and enables the soul to give itself up to Christ, that it may be one with him, not in a figurative, metaphorical way, but as really and truly as the building is one with the foundation; as much one in interest as husband and wife; one in influence, as the root and the branches, the head and the members. So that this is not an empty notion about Christ, or some clear knowledge of him, or a mere approving of his way of salvation, but it is an actual receiving of him into the heart for righteousness to justify, and to dwell and reign there to sanctify; a receiving him as a perfect Saviour, and living upon him and his fulness; waiting upon him to be taught daily; trusting wholly for acceptance to his bood and righteousness; resting, relying, leaning, upon his promised strength to hold out unto the end; and hoping for eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The saving faith thus receives Christ, and thus lives upon Christ.

Now, reader, examine and prove thyself, whether thou hast this faith. Dost thou believe with thy heart unto righteousness? Thou canst not live upon Christ, unless thou art first in Christ. Thou must be first persuaded of thine interest in him, before thou canst make use of it, and improve it; and therefore the knowledge of thy union with him must be clear and plain, before thou canst have a free and open communion with him. There must be faith, before there can be the fruits of faith; and strong faith, before there can be much and ripe fruit. Little faith will receive but little from Christ. The weak believer is full of doubts and fears; and when he wants comfort or strength, or any other things which Christ has promised to give his people, he is questioning whether he has any right to

expect them ; and therefore he does not receive them ; because he has not boldness and access with confidence to God by faith in Christ Jesus. From hence appears the necessity of being established in the faith. The believer must have clear evidence of his interest in Christ, before he can live comfortable and happy upon Christ: therefore he must look well to the foundation, and see there be no doubts left about his being settled upon it. Christ being the sure foundation, how can he safely build thereon all his salvation, unless he be first satisfied that he is upon it? The peace with God in his conscience, every act of spiritual life, and the whole walk and well ordering of his conversation, depend upon the settling of this point. It ought to be finally determined, and brought to this issue: " Christ is mine; I know it from the word of God. I have the witness of the Spirit of God, and Christ allows me, unworthy as I am, to make use of him and of his fulness for the supply of all my needs; and I find I do make use of him, and thereby I know, from daily experience, that I am in him, because I live upon him." According as this point is settled, so in proportion will be the life of faith. If the believer be thoroughly grounded in it without any doubt or fear, then he may and will with confidence improve his interest in Christ; but if he still leave it in suspense, his faith can be but little, and therefore he will obtain little comfort or strength from Christ.

Reader! art thou one of the weak in faith? Dost thou feel it? Dost thou mourn for it? and dost thou know from whence thy faith is to be strengthened? Who can increase it but he alone who gives it? Oh! pray, then, to the Lord God to give thee the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of thy understanding may be enlightened to see the infinite sufficiency of Christ's person, as God-man, and the everlasting merit of his life and death to save his people from their sins. And whatever hinders thee from seeing the fulness of Christ's salvation, and resting comfortably by faith upon it, earnestly entreat the Lord to remove it. If it be sin, beg of God to make thee more willing to part with it. If it be guilt, pray him to ordain peace in thy conscience through the blood of sprinkling. If it be much corruption, it cannot be subdued until it be first pardoned. If thou hast got under the spirit of bondage, look up to the Lord Christ for that liberty, wherewith he makes his people free. Whatever it be, as soon as it is discovered to thee, make use of prayer, believing God's word of faithfulness, that what thou asketh thou shalt have, and that he will so establish thee that thou shalt go on from faith to faith. May it be thy happy case! *Amen.*

Reader! if thou art an awakened man, convinced of sin by the word and Spirit of God, all thine enemies will try to keep thee from the clear knowledge of thy union with Christ. The reason is plain; because then thou wilt not be able to depend upon Christ's promised strength, and to make use of it by faith, which is almighty to defeat them all. Hearken not, therefore, to any suggestion, nor be afraid of any opposition, which would hinder thee from seeking to be fully convinced of thine interest in Christ, and of thy being a branch in the true vine. Satan will use all his wiles and fiery darts; and all carnal professors will be on his side; and they will have close allies in thine own breast, in thine unbelief, in thy legal spirit, and in thy lusts and corruptions. Consider, why do these enemies fight so hard against thy being safely settled, and comfortably grounded upon Christ by living faith? Is it not because thou wilt then be an overmatch for them, through the strength of Jesus? And does not this plainly show thee the absolute necessity of knowing that Christ and thou are one? Till this be known, thou wilt be afraid to apply to him and to make use of his strength; and till thou dost use it, all thine enemies will triumph over thee. Oh, beg of God then to increase thy faith, that thou mayest be fully convinced of thy union with Christ, and mayest live in him safe, and on him happy. Hear and read his word, and pray for the effectual working of the Lord the Spirit in it, and by it, that faith may come and grow by hearing, until it be finally settled without doubt or wavering, that Christ is thine, and thou art his.

After the believer is thus grounded and established in the knowledge of his union with Christ, it behoves him then to inquire what God has given him a right to in consequence of this union; and the scripture will inform him, that in the covenant of grace it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in

his Son, as the head, for the use of his members. He has it to supply all their need. They cannot possibly want any thing, but it is treasured up for them in his infinite fulness: there they may have it, grace for grace, every moment, as their occasions require; and they have it in no other way, and by no other hand, than faith, trusting the word of promise, and relying upon Christ's faithfulness and power to fulfil it; as it is written, "the just shall live by his faith," Hab. ii. 3: having received justification to live by faith in the righteousness of Christ, he depends on Christ to keep him alive, and makes use of Christ's fulness for all the wants of that spiritual life which he has given. He trusts him for them all, and lives upon him by faith for the continual receiving of them all; and according to his faith, so is it done unto him.

Let this be well weighed and considered, that the justified person lives and performs every act of spiritual life by faith. This is a very important lesson, and therefore it is taught in scripture as plainly as words can speak. Every thing is promised to, and is received by, faith. Thus it is said, Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and if children, then heirs according to the promise, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and holiness; made for their use wisdom to teach them, righteousness to justify them, and holiness to sanctify them; yea, he has all things in his fulness for their use, as the free grant speaks, 1 Cor. iii. 21, &c. "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Consider, believer, what a large estate this is: thy title to it is good, and thou enterest into possession by faith. See, then, that thou make use of thine inheritance, and live upon it. Do not say, when thou wantest any thing, I know not where to get it: for whatever the God-man has of wisdom, righteousness, holiness, power and glory, he has it, as the head of the body for thee as one of his members, for thy use and benefit, and he has promised it to thee in his word. Make free with him, then. Go to him with confidence. Thou canst not do him greater honour than to receive from him what he has to give. That is glorifying him. It is putting the crown upon his head, and confessing him to be a perfect, all-sufficient Christ, when it pleaseth thee, as it did his Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and when thou art content to live out of thyself upon his fulness for the supply of all thy needs, in time and in eternity. To live thus upon him is his glory, and it is thy privilege, thy interest, and thy happiness. In every state, spiritual and temporal, and in every circumstance, thou canst possibly be in, thou art commanded to look up to Christ, that thou mayest receive out of his fulness, and to depend upon him to save thee from every evil, and to bestow upon thee every good. In thy walk heavenwards, and in every thing thou meetest with by the way, put thy trust in Christ, and expect from him the fulfilling of all his promises. He has all power in heaven and earth for that very purpose. Still rely upon him, and cast thy burdens on him, when thou art tempted, when old corruptions arise, when the world and the devil assault thee, when under a sense of weakness and dulness in duty, when in darkness and desertion, in persecution and trouble, in pain and poverty, in sickness and death. This is the life of faith. Thou wilt live like a Christian indeed, if, being in any of these cases, thou believest that Christ is able, because he is almighty, and willing, because he has promised, to supply thy wants, and then canst trust in him for that supply. Depend upon it, thou shalt have it, and it shall be done unto thee according to his word.

After the believer is become one with Christ, and through him has a right to all the riches of grace, and may by faith make use of them as his own, why is he so long in learning this lesson perfectly? Being adopted into the heavenly family, and an heir of the heavenly inheritance, why does not he immediately live up to his privilege and to his estate? His title is good. The inheritance is sure. All things are become his; for all fulness is in Christ, and, by virtue of his union with Christ, this fulness is his, and he may by faith be always receiving out of it every grace and blessing which Christ has promised. Why, then, does not he at once attain to this happy life of faith? Sad experience proves that young believers do not. They meet with so many difficulties, that they grow up

slowly into Christ in all things. They do not attain to a solid establishment in the faith in a day. Enemies without and within stop their progress, insomuch that they often continue little children for a long time. They have the same right to Christ, the same privileges, and the same promised grace, which young men and fathers in Christ have; but they have not learned by experience how to improve their interest in him, and to make the most of it. The difficulties and temptations which weaken their hold of Christ, and stop their growth in him, are many; some of the chief are these:—

1. They continue little children and weak in faith, because they do not presently attain a solid acquaintance with the person of Christ, and are not thoroughly satisfied how able he was and sufficient for every thing he undertook, and how perfectly he has finished every part of his work.

2. This keeps them ignorant of many things in which the glory of his salvation consists: hence they have not clear believing views of its fulness, and of its freeness.

3. By which means they labour under many doubts about the manner of their receiving this salvation. A legal spirit working with their unbelief puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith; and,

4. These legal unbelieving reasonings gain great power from their unskilfulness in their warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit; and,

5. All these difficulties are mightily strengthened from their hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports more than to the word of God. While believers are under these difficulties, their faith meets with many checks in its growth; and, until they be enabled to overcome them, they continue to be little children in Christ. Their weak faith receives but little from Christ; and it continues weak, because they have but little dependence upon the effectual working of Christ's mighty power. The exceeding greatness of his power is able to strengthen them, and he has promised it, but they dare not trust him. Consider therefore, reader, if thou art one of these babes, why thou dost not grow up faster into Christ.

The first thing that stops thee is the ignorance which is in thy mind about his person, and the prejudice against him, which is in thy carnal heart. These are in all men by nature; and these Satan will work upon, in order to hinder the increase of thy faith. He will use all his cunning and his power to keep thee from growing in that knowledge of Christ which is eternal life. He will inject into thy heart blasphemous thoughts against his Godhead; and when thou art reading in scripture, or hearing about his being God manifest in the flesh, he will try to puzzle and perplex thy imagination with a How can these things be? He will represent the union of the two natures in Christ as a thing not to be understood, and as if they, who believed it with the clearest evidence of God's word and Spirit, had only some fancy about it. He has an old grudge against Christ, and will not scruple to tell any lies of him. He was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. Regard him not. Mind what the word of truth says, and pray thou mayest understand it: for the more thou knowest of the Lord Christ, that blessed God-man, the more wilt thou be settled, and established in him. It is written of him, first, that he is God, true and very God, in the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, a person coequal and coeternal with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, Isa. ix. 6. Unto us a child is born, who is the mighty God; secondly, that he is Jehovah, which signifies the self-existent essence, Isa. xliii. 11. I, even I, am Jehovah; and beside me there is no Saviour: from whence it is evident that the Saviour is Jehovah, and that he exists in a manner independent of, and distinct from, all other beings and things. St. Jude makes the opposition to this fundamental truth the condemning sin of certain heretics, who denied Jesus Christ to be the only Lord God, and our Lord. In the covenant of grace this divine Person undertook to be made man. He who was true and very God was made true and very man; he had a reasonable soul and human flesh, and was in all points like other men, sin excepted. And as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. This is the glorious Person, who undertook in the covenant of grace to be man's surety. St. Paul calls him the surety of the New Testament: and what could there be

wanting in him for this high office? He is every way qualified to be the surety for man, who is himself true and very man, who is also God as well as man, and therefore has all the perfections of Jehovah to render what he did and suffered, as man's surety, infinitely and everlastingly meritorious.

This is the blessed object of faith—God and man united in one Christ. Consider then, reader, what the scripture says of his wonderful person, in order that thy faith in him may be established. That very self-existent God, who spake, and all things were made, who commanded, and they stand fast to this very hour, was made flesh. He came to be the surety for his people, to obey and suffer in their stead. What could not his almighty power effect? Is any thing too hard for the Lord God? What obedience can his Father's law demand, which he is not infinitely able to pay? What sufferings can satisfy his Father's justice, which he is not absolutely qualified to endure? for he has every perfection and attribute equal with the Father. On this truth thou must rest; and is it not a sure foundation? In the certainty of it thou must seek to be more grounded every day; because, as thou growest in the knowledge of his divine person, thou wilt become more satisfied of his infinite sufficiency to save; and, fully convinced of this, thou wilt be enabled from scripture to answer and silence thine own unbelieving thoughts, and reject the blasphemous suggestions of Satan against the Lord Christ. Observe, then, that he is God, and that he is Jehovah. Read and meditate on what the scripture says of his Godhead, and pray that thou mayest be taught of God to understand it: for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. It is his office to glorify Jesus, by enabling thee to believe him to be Lord and God, and to call him thy Lord and thy God, and to prove he is so, by thy humble dependence upon him for every blessing, both in time and in eternity.

It is much to be lamented that believers in general take so little pains to get a clear knowledge of the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity; for want of which their faith is unsettled, and they are liable to many errors both in judgment and practice. I would therefore most earnestly recommend it to all that are weak in faith, to be diligent in hearing and reading what in scripture is revealed concerning the Trinity in unity, looking up always for the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit; and I would direct them to a form of sound words in the common prayer-book for Trinity Sunday, which contains the shortest and best account of the subject that I ever saw. "It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, almighty, everlasting God: who art one God, one Lord, not one only person, but three persons in one substance: for that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality." These are precious words. Meditate, reader, upon them, and entreat the Holy Spirit to enlighten thine understanding with the saving knowledge of them, that, being established in the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and of the Godhead of the Lord Christ, thou mayest be enabled to overcome the difficulties which arose.

Secondly, From thy not being well acquainted with the nature of Christ's salvation. Concerning which young believers are apt to have many doubts. Carnal reason is strong in them. The spirit of bondage resists with many and mighty arguments, and unbelief musters up all its forces, and there is a long and obstinate fight against being saved freely and fully by the grace of Christ Jesus. But the arguments which God has provided in his word, when applied by his Spirit, will prevail and overcome. Meditate upon them for the establishing of thy weak faith. Consider, first, the covenant. Salvation is not a thing of chance, or left to man's will or power, but it was contrived by the blessed Trinity in the covenant of grace, and every thing belonging to it was perfectly settled. It is said to be (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure. O thou of little faith! why then dost thou doubt? What! doubt of God's love? Here is a covenant springing from his mere love, and from everlasting. Doubt of its being well contrived! Infinite wisdom orders it in all things. Doubt of its being well executed! It is in all things sure; sure as God's almighty power and faithfulness can make it. What mo-

tives are here for the strengthening of thy faith! May the Lord render them effectual!

Reflect, Secondly, upon the undertakings of the Lord Christ, the Surety of this covenant. There was nothing left out of this covenant; it was ordered in all things belonging to salvation, and Christ undertook to perform all things on the part of his Father, that his law might be magnified, and his justice made honourable and glorious; and on the part of the sinner, that he might be saved from all evil, and entitled to all good. And being God and man united in one Christ, he was a proper surety to reconcile God to man, and to reconcile man to God. May these things, then, sink deep into thy heart, that thy surety has undertaken the whole of thy salvation, to do all for thee, and all in thee, and all by thee. What canst thou desire more for the settling of thy faith?

3. Perhaps thou wilt say, His undertakings were great; but has he fulfilled them? Yes; and so perfectly that he is able to save to the uttermost. He was called Jesus because he was to save his people from their sins; as their surety he was to fulfil the law for them by his obedience, and to suffer the pains and penalties of it by his death and passion. Accordingly, in the fulness of time he was manifest in the flesh, and came to do the will of his Father. Of his obedience to that will, he thus speaks: "I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do." Of his suffering that will he said with his last breath, "It is finished." Observe, whatever he undertook to do in his life and death was finished; and it was demonstrated that, as man's surety, he had done and suffered every thing ordered in the covenant by his resurrection from the dead; for then did the Father declare him to be the Son of God with power. Will not all this satisfy thee? O thou of little faith! Here is one more cause of thy doubting removed; thou canst not deny but Christ has finished every thing he undertook; and in consequence thereof he has all power in heaven and earth to bestow a full and finished salvation. What canst thou now object?

4. Does a thought arise in thy heart? It is finished; but is it so freely given that such an unworthy creature as I am may partake of it? Yes; it comes to thee in the way of a free gift. Great, inestimable, and eternal, as it is, yet it is all thine in receiving. Not he who worketh, but he who believeth, is justified from all things. It is by faith that believers are justified and sanctified, are strengthened and comforted in their walk; by faith they fight against all their enemies; and by faith they conquer, and lay hold of eternal life: and therefore it is all of faith, that it might be by grace. Salvation is wrought out and finished by thy surety, given to thee freely, continued with all its blessings in time and through eternity; as a free gift, to the praise of the glory of free grace. Why, therefore, art thou discouraged? Hast thou nothing to buy with? Then obey the Lord's command: Come and buy free salvation, without money, and without price. How should this motive still add to the establishment of thy faith! For there thou seest, whatever thou wantest is thine by believing Thou mayest have it freely by grace: it is treasured up for thee in the fulness of thy dear Saviour, and thou canst not honour him more than to make free use of it. What dost thou say to this? Hast thou anything to object? Canst thou find any fault with the covenant of grace, or with the undertakings of the God-man in it? No, certainly; the covenant was well ordered in all things, and sure; and what the Surety of the covenant undertook, he has perfectly fulfilled. Salvation is finished on his part: he has glorified the law by his infinitely perfect obedience; he has made divine justice honourable by his sufferings and death; he has brought in everlasting righteousness for his people; and will bring them to everlasting glory: for he has already taken possession of it for them as the head of the body the church; and he has all power in heaven and earth to save them day by day, until he make them partakers of his eternal salvation. What can thy heart wish for more than such a Saviour, and such a salvation. Oh! be not faithless, then, but believing; and if thou hast any doubts left, endeavour to have them cleared up by reading and prayer, until thy faith be perfectly settled on the divinity of God thy Saviour, and the infinite sufficiency of his salvation. These two points lay at the very foundation of the Christian religion: they must be supposed in all its principles, and built upon in

all its practice; therefore, being of universal influence, if they be thoroughly established, thy faith will be stedfast, and thy life well ordered and comfortable. Examine, then, and prove thyself here before thou readest any farther. Dost thou believe Christ to be true and very God, in every perfection and attribute equal with the Father? and is his a full and a free salvation? All the following directions depend upon, and can only profit thee so far as thou believest, these two points. Look well, then, to thy establishment in them. If it be strong, the life of faith will be steady and prosperous; but if it be weak, thou wilt be liable to be tost about continually with errors, and overcome with temptations, especially with those to which a legal spirit will expose thee, as I purposed to show under the

Third general head; in which is to be considered, how the little children in Christ, for want of being established in the belief of his Godhead, and of his full and free salvation, labour under many doubts; a legal spirit, working with their unbelief, puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith.

He is of a legal spirit who is under the law, and apprehends himself bound to keep it as the condition of life requiring of him, Do this, and thou shalt live. In his understanding he sees this, and no other way, to life; in his will he is continually inclined to it, and in his heart he loves it; because he fancies it in his own power to attain life in this way, and he can merit it by his own works, which mightily gratifies his self-love, and indulges his pride. The legal spirit reigns over all men in their natural state, but does not discover its tyranny until it be opposed; and then, so soon as the soul is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins, it begins to fight, trying to keep the poor sinner in bondage by its legal workings and strivings, and putting him upon seeking for some good disposition or qualification in himself, on account of which God should love him. Thus the awakened soul, under the spirit of bondage, always seeks deliverance by the works of that law which can do nothing more than bring him to the knowledge of sin, discover to him the exceeding sinfulness of it, and the exceeding great punishment which it deserves; by which means it is always nourishing the doubts and fears of unbelief. And after the Lord has, in a measure, removed them by a clear discovery of the salvation that is in Jesus, and by the gift of faith, yet still this legal spirit will be trying to bring the soul into bondage again to fear; and it too often prevails. Young believers find it the worst enemy they have to deal with. It is a sly, subtle foe, that seems to intend them a kindness, while it is always on the side of their greatest enemy. It would appear to them to be actuated by a zeal for God, but it is to eclipse the glory of the Lord Christ, to take away the all-sufficiency of his salvation, and to rob them of their great joy and peace in believing.

If any one should ask how this legal spirit comes to have such power over mankind; the scripture informs us,

First, that all men, being God's creatures, are under the law to him, bound to keep it, or bound, if they transgress, to suffer the threatened pains and penalties. In this state man was created, and in it all men are by nature; and therefore there is in us all a continual leaning to the law, and a desire to attain righteousness by the works of it. We are wedded to this way of gaining God's favour. The apostle says, there is a marriage union between us and the law, and it, like a husband, has dominion over us as long as it liveth; so that we cannot be married to Christ until that be dead wherein we are held. You may see this in the Jews. How does Moses labour to bring them off from an opinion of their own righteousness? And a greater than Moses has done the same in his discourses against the scribes and pharisees; yea, the apostles of our Lord were forced to write and preach against this leaning to the law, it gave such disturbance to the true disciples of Christ. And notwithstanding the scripture arguments against it, yet we have great numbers among us who seek for a justifying righteousness by the works of the law. And they are put upon seeking this,

Secondly, from their ignorance of the law. They are not acquainted with its nature; for it demands what they cannot pay. It insists upon an obedience, spiritual, perfect, and uninterrupted: for the least offence, if but in thought, it

comes with its fearful sentence, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law to do them." On him who does not continue in all things (and not one man ever did) this sentence takes place; and if he were to live a thousand years, he could not do any thing to repeal it. The law will always be to him the ministration of condemnation, and the ministration of death; and this is all it can do for him. It provides no remedy, and gives him no hope, but leaves him condemned to the first and to the second death; and yet, such is the blindness of the sinner, that he will be still leaning to the law, and afraid to trust wholly to the righteousness of Christ; and this arises,

Thirdly, From his ignorance of Christ's righteousness, which is infinitely perfect and wants no works of the law to be joined with it in the justifying of a sinner, because it is the righteousness of God wrought out by the God-man for his people, and it is the righteousness of faith; they receive it by faith without works; so that it is directly opposite to the righteousness of a legal spirit. Hence we have many among us—great professors too—who are ignorant of God's righteousness: they have not been entirely brought off from a legal bottom, and therefore they talk of being justified without a justifying righteousness, which, if God were to do, he would be unrighteous, and which he has declared he will not do, their fancied justification leaves them still in their sins. They dare not put their whole trust and confidence in the righteousness of Christ imputed unto sinners, and made theirs by faith. They have many fears about imputed righteousness, although the apostle has not scrupled to mention it eleven times in one chapter, Rom. iv; and these fears make them read the scripture with such prejudice, that they say they cannot find the expression, "faith in the righteousness of Christ," in all the Bible. They may find the sense of the expression in Moses, and in all the prophets, and the very words in 2 Pet. i. 1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ to them who have obtained like precious faith with us, in the Greek is EIS, in the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Here is faith in the righteousness of Christ, with several glorious titles to recommend it; namely, it is the righteousness of God, of God our Saviour, of Jesus Christ. From whence can men's opposition to this way of justification arise, but from their not being convinced by the Spirit of God of the necessity of Christ's righteousness? It is his peculiar office to convince of this truth. No teaching but his can do it. Oh that he may do it in the hearts of those who, out of a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge, eclipse the glory of the Lord, and rob afflicted consciences of their comfort by opposing imputed righteousness! It is a righteousness of so high and heavenly a nature, wrought out by another and so wonderful a Person, is bestowed as a free gift upon the chief of sinners, whereby alone they obtain remission of their sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven; and they receive it by faith only without works, which a legal spirit always wants to mix with it, that no one could ever believe in it unless it were given him from above. May it be given to those professors who cannot yet submit to the righteousness of Christ to see their want of it, and with the heart to believe in it unto salvation!

Reader! hast thou not found what an enemy this legal spirit is to thy peace and joy, and how it is always inclining thee to some self-righteousness, through thy ignorance of the righteousness of the law, and of the righteousness of faith? And wouldst thou gladly be delivered from it? Know, then, that nothing can subdue it but the bringing into thy conscience a better hope from a better righteousness than that of the law; and when thou art enabled to plead it there against all the charges of sin and Satan, then thou wilt stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free. His is a better righteousness; it is infinitely perfect and everlasting; even the righteousness of God. By faith in this righteousness thou shalt be saved from the law, and shalt receive remission of sins; through it the Father doth accept thee and give thee the Spirit of his Son to lead, and comfort, and sanctify thee; he doth love thee and bless thee, as his dear child, making all things work together under him for thy good, and keeping thee by his mighty power through faith unto salvation: so that, in and on account of this righteousness, thou shalt be saved from all the evils of sin, and re-

ceive all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven. And this thou shalt have freely, without any merit, or work of the law; for the righteousness comes wholly by grace, and is for thee a sinner as such, and is to justify thee from the condemnation of the law, to turn its curses into blessings, and its threatened punishments into happiness. And this it can do for thee perfectly and everlastingly; so that, being found in this righteousness, there is no grace promised in time, or glory in eternity, but it shall be thine. The Lord God promises them to thee in the fullest and freest manner; to thee, without any exception or limitation, being a sinner and ungodly, though one of the vilest and basest; yet to thee, as such, is the word of this salvation sent. And it will be all thine in the comfortable enjoyment of it, through believing. Thou art to bring nothing to recommend thee, but that thou art a sensible sinner, and thy right and title to a finished salvation is clear from the warrant of God's word, when thou believest with thy heart in the righteousness of Christ. The divine command is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:" the promise is, "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, shall receive remission of sins, shall be justified from all things, shall have everlasting life." Why, then, dost thou lean to works, since salvation is by faith? Why dost thou disquiet thyself about attaining the righteousness of the law, and thereby suffer the law to disturb the peace of thy conscience, since thou hast a far better righteousness, which ought to reign there, even the righteousness which is of God by faith? For thou art a believer, and although a weak one, yet thou hast as good a title to Christ and his righteousness as the strongest believer in the world; because thy right comes from the free grant of the word of grace, and is apprehended by faith, by which all things are become thine. Thou art an heir of them all by faith in Christ Jesus. O thou of little faith! why, then, dost thou doubt? Remember, how highly thou dishonourest the infinite love and free salvation of Jesus, and how much thou robbest thy own soul of its peace and of its own growth in grace by thy weak and little faith. Think upon these things, and entreat the Author and Finisher of the faith to strengthen it in thy soul.

But perhaps thou wilt say, How shall I so live upon Christ with my weak faith that it may grow stronger, and I may get the better of my legal spirit? Here is the remedy: may it be to thee effectual! The scripture directs thee to look at Christ God-man as thy surety, who for thee has wrought out a finished salvation, and whatever he has promised in his word relating to this salvation, thou art to trust him for the making of it good, and to depend upon his faithfulness and power to make it good to thee. Whatever, therefore, he has done and suffered to save thee from the curse of the law, and from the spirit of bondage, and to make thee free with the liberty of the children of God, thou art to live upon him for these blessings, and by faith to be always receiving them from him in the fullest and largest measure that he promises them to thee. Look not into thyself, then, for any qualification; but look unto Jesus, that thou mayest experience more of that liberty wherewith he hath made thee free, and mayest be no longer a babe unskilful in the word of righteousness. Hear what he says: If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed, free from the law of sin and death, free from condemnation at the bar of God, and, being freed from the bondage of corruption, ye shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. This is the freedom which God promises thee: it is very extensive, has many noble privileges, and vast blessings. By faith all is thine. See how perfectly believers have received all; and may thy faith be like theirs! "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness to our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. viii. 15, &c. Observe what is here said of the believing Romans, and by faith thou shalt experience the same, as perfectly as they did.

1. They were freed from the spirit of bondage, under which they once had laboured:

2. They were so freed as to be under it no more; they were not to fear again, as heretofore: for,

3. They had received the Spirit of adoption, and he gave them the evidence of their sonship. Upon which,

4. They believed God was their reconciled Father, and they had boldness and access to him with confidence. And therefore,

5. They lived in light and walked in love, like his children and heirs, who were to abide in his house for ever.

See also what great freedom the Galatians had, chap. iv. 4, &c.: "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father: wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Oh what treasures of grace and consolation are there in this scripture, tending to subdue thy legal spirit! Consider some of them.

1. All men having broken the law, and being under the curse of it, Christ was made under the law, that the law might reach him as the surety of his people; accordingly,

2. By his obedience to the precepts, and by his suffering the penalties of the law, he redeemed his people, who were under the law; so that,

3. They are no longer in bondage to it; but being made free, and having received the adoption of sons,

4. They have the spirit of liberty, sent into their hearts to witness to them that Christ fulfilled the law for them; and,

5. That the Father loves them, as his dear children, and they love him and serve him without fear, crying to him, Abba, Father;

6. Wherefore they are no longer servants in bondage to any one, but are made free indeed, being now the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And,

7. If sons, then heirs of God, and free to inherit whatever he has promised to give his children in earth and heaven.

These and many more arguments are contained in this one scripture, tending to subdue thy legal spirit, and to bring thee to live more comfortably by faith upon Christ, who, as thy surety, has fully kept the law for thee in his life and death. Thou art to consider thyself now, not under the law, but under grace, and therefore absolutely free from the condemning power of the law. This thou must maintain against all the carnal reasonings of thy legal spirit: "Christ is my law-fulfiller." And thou wilt glorify him for redeeming thee from under the law, and wilt live in sweet peace in thine own conscience, while thou keepest fast hold of this most blessed and eternally precious truth. May all thy reading and prayer, and the use of all means help thee to grow in the knowledge and experience of it!

There is a very strong bias and leaning in weak believers to a legal spirit, which ought to make them read such promises as I have been mentioning over and over again, that God may thereby encourage them to maintain the liberty which he hath given them in Christ Jesus, and to stand fast in it against the fresh attacks of the devil and unbelief. They should be always jealous over themselves, and watchful against their enemies; because, after they have in a truly gospel and evangelical way, through grace, got their legal spirit subdued, yet if it be not in the same way kept subdued, it will break out with more power than ever, and will be likely to bring them into bondage again to fear. And this may, and I have known it, often happen: after they had obtained some great victories over it, and finding it not stir for some time, they flattered themselves they should have but little trouble with it any more. Thus they were drawn off their guard, which gave room to their legal spirit to exert itself again with vigour. This surprised the weak believers, and put them upon reasoning and doubting, whether all had been right with them before; and so, at the very time when they should have taken the shield of faith, and should have been making use of it, they were questioning whether they had any; which left them unarmed in the midst of their enemies, an easy prey to every temptation; but an invisible power kept them safe, although they were not comfortable in themselves.

For the encouragement of persons in this case, that they may presently recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, they should observe,

First, What the scripture says of a legal spirit; describing it to be one of the members of their corrupt nature; one of the affections of the flesh; which will never be quite dead while the breath is in their bodies. It is an enemy that will be always fighting against the Holy Spirit; for they are directly contrary the one to the other; and therefore believers must not dream of any such victory as leaves no more fighting, but must expect sharp battles with their legal spirit as long as ever they live. And,

Secondly, the same means, by which they formerly obtained victory, must be made use of again. As often as the legal spirit is tempting, Christ's strength must be opposed to it, and his strength must be brought into the soul by faith in his righteousness; as it is written, Isa. xlv. 24: "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Righteousness comes first, and is established in the conscience, that it may be pleaded and maintained there against all the charges and accusations of the law. And as often as these arise afresh, still they must be answered and silenced with this plea:—In the Lord Christ have I righteousness; he is my law-fulfiller; and I depend upon his promised strength to make me stand fast in that liberty wherewith he hath made me free. And the soul must not only thus quiet and stay itself by faith upon the righteousness and strength of Christ for victory over the present temptation, but must also,

Thirdly, continually do this; because there is in our nature a continual opposition to it. The experience of which is the believer's safety. The abiding sense of his being naturally inclined to lean to legal dependencies, and therefore his want of Christ every moment to justify him by his righteousness, and to keep him by his strength, will be the surest way to prevent his falling into bondage; for this will keep him very jealous over himself, and will show him the necessity of living out of himself for righteousness and strength; and while he liveth upon Christ for these by faith, he shall not be overcome by any enemy.

The glory of the incarnate God, and his infinite sufficiency to save, have not a greater enemy than a legal spirit; and therefore I have enlarged upon this point, that believers might be convinced, from the word of God, they were saved from the condemnation of the law. They will never live comfortably till they see the law dead and buried, and then willingly give up themselves to be espoused to Christ, who will make them free indeed. And when they have learned of him to enjoy and walk in their Christian liberty, then they will be better acquainted with the warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit, which warfare is the

Fourth great hindrance, that stops the growth of faith in weak believers. They are unskilful in it, soon tired of it, and often likely to be defeated. They do not enter into the battle strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, nor are they certain, if they fall in battle, they shall be saved with an eternal salvation. These are great discouragements, and, until these be removed, they cannot fight the good fight of faith, like good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

The case is thus:—There is in every believer an old man, and a new man, nature and grace, flesh and spirit; and these are opposite and contrary the one to the other in their principles and actions; they are always desiring different things, and pursuing different ends, which occasions a continual war between them. The flesh lusteth always against the spirit, and has many and mighty allies on its side,—armies of lusts, the faculties of soul and body to bring forth sin, hosts of fallen angels, and all the world that layeth in wickedness. But the new man, renewed in the spirit of his mind, has a reconciled God on his side, and therefore he need not fear what any enemy can do unto him, but may bravely face the stoutest of them, even death itself, relying upon that sure word of promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Here is the believer's encouragement to fight; his God will never leave him. Here he obtains victory every day: his God never forsakes him; and after he has fought the good fight of faith, his God and Saviour will make him more than conqueror: he will send death to kill sin. And then the believer will never more have temptation from it, nor sorrow about it. But till that happy time come, he must be fighting against

his corrupt nature and all its allies. No peace can be made with them, not even a truce. He must expect no kind of favour from them; because they are God's irreconcilable enemies, and therefore, as long as he is in the world, he must be fighting against the world; as long as he has a body of flesh, he must oppose it with its affections and lusts, because they war against the soul; and as long as he is in the reach of temptation, he must oppose the tempter, be steadfast in the faith, never putting off his armour until the Lord give him a discharge.

The believer's peace within, and victory without, are closely connected with the clear understanding of this case; and although I have stated it from the word of God, and agreeably to the sense in which the church of God has always interpreted it, yet, for its more full confirmation, some testimonies must be brought, which speak to the very point: first, to the believer's having in him an old man and a new; secondly, that these two are at war; and thirdly, that they fight together till death.

First, the apostle says to the saints at Ephesus, Eph. iv. 22, &c., "put off the old man, put on the new." Mind, the same persons had both in them an old man, corrupt according to his deceitful lusts, daily to be put off, and a new man to be put on, and renewed, day by day, in the spirit of his mind. The old man is described to have a body of sin with all his members, his affections and his lusts; these must not be obeyed, but mortified. "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," Rom. vi. 12, 13. The saints at Rome had sin in them; and it wanted to reign, as it had done heretofore, in the lusts hereof; but,

Secondly, They were not to obey them. There was in them a new man, who was to fight against those fleshly lusts which war against the soul. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Gal. v. 17. Here is battle between two: the flesh, the whole nature of the old man; and the spirit of the new man, born again of the Spirit: the cause of it is, the one wills what the other hates; each wants to carry his own will into execution; and these being contrary the one to the other, they fight for mastery; in the battle, the flesh, the old man, is defeated, and the spirit working in the new man conquers; and this lusting and fighting is in one and the same person; in him who is said to be not under the law, to be led by the spirit, and to live and to walk in the spirit. In Rom. viii. 7, the apostle calls the flesh "the carnal mind," and he says, "It is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Since it is enmity itself, there is no reconciling it; it will not, nay it cannot, obey God, but is ever lusting and rebelling against his law. The nature of the battle is described at length in Rom. vii. The chapter consists of three parts: first, the believer's liberty from the law to ver. 6; secondly, he answers some objections made against the law from its nature and properties, and that in his own person, because it had been the means of bringing him to the right knowledge of sin, ver. 7; and sin being discovered by the law through the corruption of nature, raged and rebelled the more in him, ver. 8; and the law had made him sensible of God's anger against sin, and of his deserving death and hell for it, ver. 9 to 14; and from thence to the end of the chapter he describes the conflict between the old man and the new, the one consenting to the law, and the other resisting the law. In this conflict there were sharp attacks: in the first he found in himself two contrary principles of action always resisting each other; the old man fighting against the new, from ver. 14 to 18; secondly, when the will of the new man was good through the opposition of the old man, it had not the desired effect, ver. 19, 20; and thirdly, he felt in himself two contrary laws, both requiring obedience; the law of the members warring and rebelling against the law of God written in the renewed mind: for no sooner did his mind, guided by the Holy Spirit, set about any thing which God's law commanded, but he found the law of the members making a strong resistance. This he groaned under as a heavy burden, and was humbled for it before God, expecting pardon from him, and victory every day, and perfect deliverance at last.

I cannot enlarge upon this chapter. Turn to it and read it over upon the

plan which I have here laid down; remembering all along, that St. Paul is describing himself. He ten times says, it is himself he is speaking of, from ver. 7 to ver. 14, where he is showing of what use the law had been to him when he was first convinced of sin; and from thence to the end, he mentions himself thirty-eight times. *I*, the apostle Paul, *I myself*, my very self, and not another; *I myself am*, now, at this present, at the very time of writing this; *I myself*, whom the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made free from the law of sin and death; I myself, to whom now there is no condemnation, for I am *in* Christ Jesus, and I walk after the Spirit, am still at war with sin that dwelleth in me, with the old man, with the flesh, with the law of the members, with the body of sin. Although I have a new nature, and God is on my side, yet it is a hard and a sharp battle. I find it so. The length of it makes it still more painful, and forces me to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Paul was not out of God's favour, or accursed; but as the word rendered *wretched* means, he was weary and tired with his continual fighting; troubled with the filthy motions of sin rising and striving and rebelling in him, and giving him no rest: this was such a hard warfare, that he was ever looking out and praying, "Who shall deliver me?" He meant wholly, perfectly, deliver me from this corruption. He sighed for it, not because he doubted of an absolute deliverance, but because he had sure and certain hope of it; not because he was ignorant who his deliverer was, but because he had steadfast faith in him. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ." This comforted him, and kept him fighting on with courage. He knew that he should gain the victory, and through Christ, not through his own virtues or works, but through faith in the life and death, in the blood and righteousness of Christ, he should at last be more than conqueror.

Since this was the case with the apostle, who can expect a discharge from this warfare until death? What! says one, is it to continue so long? Yes. The scripture is very clear to this point, as I was, thirdly, to show,

The seat of the corruption of the old man, or of the flesh, is not only in our nature, but is also our very nature itself. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, altogether carnal and corrupt. It is a filthy fountain, always sending forth impure streams; and therefore, while the believer is in the body, he must either be fighting against the flesh, or else be led captive by it. We that are, says Paul, in this tabernacle of flesh, do groan, being burdened with sin and sorrow. And when did they expect an end of their groaning, and rest from their burdens? Not till the tabernacle was dissolved by death. Ourselves, says he, who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. The body will be redeemed from the grave, and raised like the glorious body of Jesus Christ: this is promised, and this we wait for; and until death deliver us from this mortal corruptible body, we shall be groaning under the burden of it. This was St. Paul's case. He had long sighed to be discharged from his warfare, and, like an old weary tired soldier, he wished the hard tedious campaign was ended, that he might enter into rest: but hear with what joy he at last cries out, "I have fought the good fight." Have fought it? What! is the battle over? Yes, just over.—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand—I have finished my course:"—My battle and my life are finished together, and so must thine, reader. Thou art to resist unto blood, striving against sin; for thou art called to fight the good fight of faith, until thou lay hold of eternal life. Since thou art a believer, however weak, and hast a new man in thee, as well as an old, they will be fighting against each other till thou finish thy course. And if this discourage thee, consider what God has spoken concerning this warfare, and what exceeding great and precious promises he has made to them who are engaged in it. He has promised to pardon those corruptions of the old man, to subdue them, and to deliver thee from the very being of them. Canst thou desire more? Mark well what he says to thee, and be not faithless, but believing.

First, although the believer has an old man, corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, always warring against the new man, yet the Lord God has promised a free and a full pardon; because he has imputed sin, all thy sin, to the Son of

his love, who bore it in his own body upon the tree. After the apostle, in Rom. vii. had described the battle between them, he makes this inference—"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus,"—to them who are in Christ, united by faith as members to him their head, and thereby partakers of his righteousness, there is *now*, while they are fighting against their corruptions, no condemnation; "For," says he, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and of death," Rom. viii. 2. These words demonstrate, that Paul was speaking of himself in the seventh chapter. Although he had the corruption of nature still in him, and was fighting against it, yet, being in Christ by faith, he was made free from the guilt and punishment due to it; therefore he had, and every believer shall have, a full pardon. In consequence of which,

Secondly, He shall subdue the corruptions of the old man. This is promised and shall be made good. The Lord encourages believers to oppose the reign of sin in their mortal body, and not to obey it in the lusts thereof; with this promise:—"Sin shall not have dominion over you," Rom. v. 14. "Ye are under grace, and grace is almighty to subdue sin; because it is atoned for. In like manner he says to the Gal. v. 16, "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Ye shall not fulfil them, either in word or deed. The lusts of the flesh will be in you, but not one of them shall reign over you the spirit of Jesus will teach you to resist and enable you to overcome them, yea, to crucify and mortify them, day by day. And besides this the Lord has promised,

Thirdly, Deliverance from the very being of thy corruptions. The time is coming, when they shall not exist in the believer, nor any more be suffered to tempt him. He shall be made holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkle of sin, or any such thing. In this perfect state the Father now sees him, and accepts him in the beloved, and after death admits the soul into his presence, cleansed with the blood, clothed with the righteousness, adorned with the graces of his dear Son; and body, soul and spirit, shall be in this perfect state in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ—they shall be unblamable in holiness before God, even our father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. It doth not yet appear how great a perfection of holiness this will be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall then be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Such are the divine promises. And dost thou not see from hence, reader, what great things thou art to expect in thy present warfare? If thou sayest, How shall I attain all that is promised? Know that it is to come to thee by faith. Christ and all that he has is thine upon believing, and particularly a free pardon for indwelling sin, as well as for any other. Consider him as thy surety, God-man taking thy sins and sufferings upon himself to save thee from them. By his life and death he has obtained full salvation, which he gives to thee freely. And thou hast received it. Thou canst not deny but thou art a believer, and it is written, "All that believe are justified from all things," from the corruption of their nature, as well as the corruptions of their lives. Know, then, that there is no condemnation to thee. The Judge himself says so. And when he acquits, who shall lay any thing to thy charge? Here thou must hold through the power of the Lord, if thou wouldst have the spiritual warfare successfully conducted. Abide by the sentence of God, and keep condemnation out of thy conscience. Have it ready to plead against all charges, from whatever quarter they come, that Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and of death.

Here I must refer thee back to what has been said concerning Christ and his finished salvation. Thou now seest how necessary it is thou shouldest be well established in the belief of his Godhead, and the infinite sufficiency of his salvation; so that he is both able and willing to save thee from all thy sins, and all the miseries due to them, and to bestow upon thee eternal happiness, and to bring thee by his almighty power safe to the enjoyment of it. All this he will give thee, not for working but in believing. I entreat thee therefore to read again and again what has been before said upon these subjects; and the good Lord help thee to apply it to thy present case, that thou mayest be fully assured thou art in Christ, and that there is no condemnation to thee.

But perhaps thou art ready to say—Stedfastly do I believe all this; but I do not find such victory over my corruptions as I could wish; nay I think, at times, they rage more than ever. Here thou forgettest the Lord thy strength. Thou dost not make use of him, and therefore thou failest. The woman with the bloody issue grew worse and worse till she went to Christ: so wilt thou. Why is it given thee to know Christ in the spirit, but that thou shouldst go to him daily, and plead his promise—Lord, thou hast declared that sin shall not have dominion over thy people. I believe this word of thine cannot be broken; and therefore, helpless in myself, I rely upon thy faithfulness to save me from the dominion of such and such a sin (as then tempts thee). Put forth thy power, O Lord Christ, and get thyself glory in subduing my flesh with its affections and lusts.—And then trust him to make his word good, ane wait the event. Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than sin, any sin thus left with Christ to be subdued, shall reign over thee.

If thou sayest, I think I seek for victory over sin in no other way, and yet I do not attain it so completely as I desire—Depend upon it thou art under some mistake; for Christ is almighty to fulfil every promise in its largest sense and fullest meaning, and there never was a believer who could justly charge him with the breach of his word. Perhaps thou dost believe that power to subdue sin comes from Christ, and thou art expecting it from him; but hast thou not some legal dependence, some notion of thy own working together with him? Search and see. Dost thou commit all to the Lord, who is to do all and in all? Is the whole battle left to him—wisdom and courage, and armour, and strength, and patience, and victory, are all from the Lord? If thou art not doing this simply, thou art not living by faith upon Christ; but thou art fighting in thine own strength, and depending upon some inherent stock of grace, or knowledge, or experience. While these proud, selfish motives put thee upon asking his help, he will not give it thee; because thou dost not wholly depend upon him for it.

Or perhaps Christ does not appear on thy side because thou art proposing some wrong end. Thou art working and striving against sin to establish a righteousness of thine own, which is to be some part of thine acceptance before God, and thou hast been trying in thine own strength to get thy corruptions quite subdued, but they were too strong for thee, and therefore now thou art glad to make use of Christ's help. And if he would do the work for thee, then thou wouldst have confidence in the flesh, and this thy fancied holiness would be the ground of thy rejoicing before God. Is it not so? If it be, thou wilt never succeed upon this plan: Christ will not give his glory to another, nor put the crown of his gospel-grace upon the head of thy legal dependence.

Or perhaps thou art expecting from Christ what he has not promised—such a victory over thy corruptions, that they shall not fight again for some time, or that they shall be quite dead and buried. And so they shall be in the Lord's appointed time. But now he calls upon thee to fight against them; he provides thee armour for that purpose, even the whole armour of God; and he requires thee to resist unto blood, striving against sin, promising thee daily victory. This is thy present state of warfare. To this thou art now called; and there is no discharge in this war. Oh, beware then, as thou lovest thy soul, of a false peace! Thou wilt be sadly deluded if thou ever supposest that thy fighting is over before thy course be finished. The good fight of faith must continue till death; for till then, corruption being in thee, thou must oppose it, relying upon God for promised victory over it. He is able to save thee from the very being of it now, as well as in heaven. But it is not his mind and will. Here he will have thee to live by faith, which is every moment to keep thee dependent upon Christ, or thou wilt fall. This is to exalt his grace, and to subdue thy selfish legal spirit; to humble thy pride, to put thee upon prayer and watchfulness, to make sin more hateful, and heaven more desirable, and to securet he glory of every victory to him, whose strength is perfected in thy weakness. These are some of his gracious purposes in keeping thee continually dependent upon his strength; and if he has made thee willing to fight and conquer, to the praise of the glory of his grace, then thou wilt experience that blessed promise—" sin shall not have domi-

nion over thee." And it will not be long before sin shall not have a being in thee.

Reader! if thou hadst fallen into these or any other mistakes concerning the subduing of thy corruptions, mind what is written, and what is promised. Having first received, through faith in the blood of Christ, the pardon of thy sin, then, as one of his good soldiers, thou art to fight against it all thy life. He, being on thy side, promises to subdue sin for thee. Without him thou canst do nothing in this warfare, and therefore thy faith resting on his promise is to wait the fulfilling of it. He has given thee his word, that he will use his almighty power for this purpose. To that word must thou look, believing that Christ will bring thee victory; continually, if thy faith fail not; greater, as thy faith increases; complete, when the good fight of faith shall be ended, and thou shalt rest from thy labours. All this he stands engaged to do; and his power is able to fulfil his engagements; and thy faith will bring thee happy experience of his power. When corruptions rise, temptations are strong, enemies numerous, dangers on every side; that is the time to glorify Christ, by making use of his promised strength. Then put thy trust in the Captain of thy salvation, and fear not. Look unto Jesus, and look at nothing but him. The battle is his. He will fight for thee, and thou shalt hold thy peace. Leave him to direct all, to do all, and to finish all relating to it; and then, as he can get all the glory, thou shalt see what a salvation he will bring thee. Oh, that thy faith did but reach to the extent of his promises! How successful would be thy spiritual warfare! such victories over thine enemies; corruptions so subdued; the world so crucified; Satan so defeated; as thou canst now scarce believe! The Lord increase thy faith. Look up to him for it: because, as thy faith increases, let the battle grow hotter and hotter, thou wilt find thyself safer, and more reason to give thanks to God through Jesus Christ thy Lord.

For want of attending to the important truths already considered, and of bringing them into constant use and exercise, young believers are liable to fall into another great mistake, which keeps their faith weak, and stops its growth; namely, a hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports; which is the fifth general head I purpose to consider.

They are seeking to be established, and they think that they should have no doubt of their being true believers, if they had but the testimony of sense, and comfortable feelings to assure them of it. And being used to judge in this way in other matters (for it is our strongest evidence in natural things), they are disposed to expect the same in spiritual; and they are the rather disposed to it, because sensible comforts are promised in scripture; which, being very desirable and pleasing to nature, they are apt to covet them too much, and, from not regarding what the scripture says about them, they are apt to seek them in a wrong way and for a wrong end. Sense judges from what it sees, and draws its inference from what it feels; so that its report to the conscience, either of a believer's state, or of his growth in it, is not from unchangeable things, which would settle the conscience in peace, but from changeable things which leave room for continual doubting. Sense also looks at the fruits of faith more than at the object of it; and if the believer has been misled, and taught to confound these two together, he will be at great uncertainty in judging of his state; for, instead of making the word of God, he will make his comforts, the ground of his faith; and as these are more or less, so will his faith be. When he has comfortable feelings, then he will think himself a believer; and when he has none, then he will think himself an unbeliever, changing his judging of himself, as his feelings do, like the wind, and varying as his comforts do, like the weather. This is a common case. I have seen the sad effects of it in the lives of many of my acquaintance, who, from being taught thus to judge of themselves, were tossed about for several years, up and down, now comforted, then doubting, and could not get any solid establishment till the Word and Spirit of God convinced them that sense was not to be the ground of their believing, nor the object to which they were to look. Sense judges by feeling, and reports what it sees. Sense says, Now I am in the favour of God; for I feel it; now he is my God; for I find him so: I am comforted. Now he demonstrates it to me; for I feel near-

ness to him in prayer, and sweet answers. Now I am sure my duties and services are acceptable; for I am quite lively in them, and I come from them with warm affections. Now I cannot doubt; for I feel the assurance of his love to me. And when sense has lost those comfortable feelings, then it draws contrary inferences:—Now I am not in the favour of God; for I do not feel it. Now he is not my God; for I do not find him so; I am not comforted, &c. What can be the issue of this, but continual wavering and changing? For our feelings are sometimes more, sometimes less, as every believer experiences. What an unsettled state, then, must he be in, who has no way to judge of himself but by those changeable things! What room does he leave for continual doubting! and what trouble and misery does he thereby bring upon himself, as well as dishonour to the unchangeableness of God in his nature and promises!

If the poor weak believer should say, I am convinced of this, and I should be glad to have my faith so fixed, that I might be freed from doubts and fears—Then let it rest upon the word of God, which is the only ground of believing, and is therefore called the word of faith, upon which faith is built, and by which it is nourished and grows up. The believer should receive and rely upon what God hath spoken, and because he hath spoken it; for his word changeth not. It abideth the same for ever: therefore what it truly reports, stands upon an immovable rock. Sense and feeling may report things contrary to it, but the believer can silence them with "God hath spoken it:" for his faith has evidence of things not seen, and he does not form his judgment by the things which are seen, but by the things which are not seen. Generally speaking, faith judges the very contrary to what sense does, and will not believe what sense perceives. Abraham, against hope, believed in hope; so do all his children. They believe the pardon of sin, victory over sin, and the death of sin, the immortality of the body, though crumbled to dust and atoms, the second coming of Christ, and the eternal state of happiness or misery. Faith looks at God's word, calling the things which be not as though they were, and is commonly forced to contradict sense. Sense judges from what it sees—Faith from what God says. Sense is governed by what appears—Faith by what God says shall be. Sense looks inward—Faith looks outward. Faith can answer the seeming contradictions which sense opposes to it, from the word of God which cannot be broken. And when sense is ready to despair, and all its fine frames and feelings are gone, then it is the believer's happy privilege still to trust in the Lord, and to have a good hope because of the word of his grace.

But, perhaps, thou art ready to say, It is written, that there is great joy and peace in believing, yea, joy unspeakable and full of glory. True; these are what faith produces, and not what it is. These are the fruits of faith, which it brings forth in most abundance from the inexhaustible fulness of Jesus. The more simple the believer is, the more he eyes Christ, the object of faith, and the word, the ground of faith; the more clear and distinct will the actings of his faith be; and consequently it will bring greater peace into the conscience, and more joy into the affections. But still, these fruits are not faith; no more than the fruit is the tree. The fruits do not go before faith, but follow it, and grow from it. This is God's order. He gives us his word to be the ground of our believing, and by believing, all things promised in the word are made ours; then we go on comfortably, and are happy: but when sense is put in the place of the word, then the consequence is, that weak believers have got a changeable rule to judge of themselves by, which hinders them from being established in believing, and from attaining the promised peace and joy.

Some may begin to object—What! are you against all lively frames, and sensible comforts? No; God forbid! I would have them spring from the right cause, that they might be more pure and fixed than they commonly are. God's word and promises are an unchangeable foundation to rest upon, even when sensible feelings are gone; because Christ, revealed in the word, and laid hold of in the promises, changeth not. Therefore, reader, for thine own sake, and for the glory of God, take heed what thou buildest thy faith upon. Beware of making any thing that sense reports to thee the ground of it; but rest it upon that which abideth for ever. The word of God is a sure foundation. It will never fail thee.

Thou mayest safely depend upon it, because it cannot be broken, and stedfastly rely upon Christ to make its promises good to thee. There is thy object. Look at him. And since he is thine, thy Saviour and thy God, make use of him as such, and trust body and soul, and all things belonging to them in his hands, and among the rest, thy comforts. Be content he should give them to thee as seemeth him good. Set not thy heart upon them, nor follow him, as the multitude did for the sake of his loaves and fishes, and the dainties that he gave them, who, when these were withheld, soon forsook their kind Benefactor. Thou art by faith to make up all thy happiness in him, and in him only; and he himself, being thine, let him give thee or take away what he will besides, thou hast enough. What! is not this comfort enough, that thou hast got the pearl of great price—the infinitely rich, inestimably precious Jesus, who has the wisdom of God to contrive what is best for thee, boundless love to dispose him, and almighty power to enable him to give it thee; and he has promised it: canst thou desire more? Walk, then, with him by faith, and not by sight. When the word of God is the ground of thy faith, which rests there, and is grown to a fixed settlement, then thou wilt be enabled to go on comfortably, whatever thy frames and feelings be; yea, when these are at the lowest ebb, thou wilt not be thereby discouraged. Suppose thou art walking in darkness, thou canst walk by faith; because thou hast a promise: "Who is among you that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God," Isa. l. 10. Still let him trust and believe. Why? Because God is *his* God still. Mind that; his God still: this blessed relation still subsists; and faith may draw comfort from it in the darkest hour. Suppose thou art in heaviness, through manifold temptations, the word says to thee, "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning:" here thou mayest quiet thy heavy heart, and rest with confidence, till the Lord deliver thee out of thy temptations. Suppose God hideth his face from thee, thou hast the example of those in the same case: "I will wait for the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and will look for him," Isa. viii. 17. Wait in faith, looking for him, and thou shalt see the light of his countenance. Suppose all other comforts fail; thou hast one still, worth more than all—"This God is my God for ever and ever. He will never leave me nor forsake me." This is the happiness of the true believer; he is enabled to maintain his confidence, when sensible feelings are no more. And thou seest, reader, how this happiness is attained, and how it is preserved. It is by trusting to things which change not; the word of God, the Son of God and his promises, all which are in him, yea, made in him, and in him, Amen, fulfilled by him. May the Lord help thee simply to trust his word, and to live upon Christ for the fulfilling of it, and then thou wilt indeed get, what thou art now seeking in vain, a comfortable frame, and wilt be enabled to maintain it against all the discouragements of sense. To that end, search the scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation; and let it be thy daily request to the Lord, to make thee strong in faith, that thou mayest not stagger at his promises through unbelief, but mayest, against hope, believe in hope. Beg of him, when sense goes contrary to the word, to enable thee still to believe it, and not to doubt of Christ's faithfulness to fulfil it—and ask for strength to walk every moment by faith, and not by sight. Thus the Lord will carry thee on safely and sweetly from faith to faith, till thou receive the end of thy faith, even the salvation of thy soul. May it be so! Amen.

St. Paul has been my guide hitherto. He says, Heb. v. 13, that a babe in Christ is one who is unskilful in the word of righteousness. To this determination of his I have had an eye all along, and have accordingly endeavoured to remove those hindrances out of the way of young beginners, which chiefly arise from their unskilfulness in the word of righteousness. Righteousness signifies strict justice. With respect to God, it is paying him the full demands of his holy law: in this sense there is none of us righteous, no, not one The God-man, Christ Jesus, the surety of his people, came to work out such a righteousness for them, and the word reveals it, sets it before them in its infinite freeness, and in its infinite sufficiency to justify from all things. The word is also the means, in the hand of the Spirit, of bringing them with the heart to believe unto righteous-

ness, and therefore the scripture is called the word of righteousness; and being unskilful in it signifies want of experience in the management of it; unskilful in the knowledge of the person of the Lord our righteousness, who is true and very God, as well as true and very man; unskilful in the nature of his righteousness, that it is absolutely perfect and everlastingly meritorious, so that any sinner by receiving it will be not only delivered from sin, and all the miseries due to sin, but will also be entitled to life and glory; unskilful in the gift of righteousness, how freely God bestows it, nothing being required to make it the sinner's but receiving it, and therefore it is called the righteousness of faith; because by faith he trusts in it for salvation, and for all its blessings in earth and heaven, and expects them as the fruits of righteousness; unskilful in experience, not knowing how to plead this righteousness against the charges of the law, of conscience, and of the accuser of the brethren, and therefore apt to fall into a legal spirit, to be distressed in their warfare between the old man and the new, and to covet and to rely more upon sensible feelings than upon the sure testimony of God in his word. These are some of the principal difficulties which young believers meet with; and they all arise from their unskilfulness in the word of righteousness, and therefore I have particularly considered some scripture motives for removing them out of the way. And after thou hast perused these motives, have they been the means of settling thy judgment, comforting thy conscience, and strengthening thy faith? Dost thou see more of Christ's grace and power to save thee a sinner than thou didst before, and therefore canst trust him better, and in time of need make more use of his promised grace? If this be thy case, give him the glory, and may he carry thee on from strength to strength. But if thou hast received no improvement from reading thus far, what is the reason? Perhaps thou art under some of the temptations here described. Search, and see: and whatever it be, either in doctrine or experience, which hinders the increase of thy faith, may the Lord discover it to thee, and enable thee to overcome it, that thou mayest be no longer a babe, unskilful in the word of righteousness, but mayest grow up to be a young man strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might!

The apostle Paul has directed me how to speak to the babes in Christ; and another apostle shows how they grow up to be young men, and thereby he furnishes me with matter for the second part of this treatise on the life of faith: "I have written unto you, young men," says he, "because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one," 1 John ii. 14. These young men knew the principles of the doctrine of Christ: they were established in the belief of his Godhead, of the infinite sufficiency of his salvation, of the free gift of all its graces and blessings promised to him that worketh not, and received by faith only, and all treasured up for the believer's use in the fulness of Christ Jesus, to whom he is to bring nothing to recommend him, but the promise of the grace which he then wants, and a dependence upon Christ to supply that want. These young men had attained to a good degree of knowledge and experience in these truths. They began to be able to keep the evidence of their union with Christ clear and distinct, and to improve it by their communion with him in all his offices. But notwithstanding their establishment in these points, they had many temptations and great difficulties; still they knew but in part—still they had a fleshly corrupt nature to watch over, and to fight against, always inclining them to trust to the law, to their feeling, to any thing but Christ, and always disposing them to yield to the suggestions of the devil, and to the allurements of the world. This warfare, instead of ceasing, grows hotter and hotter; but they grow stronger. It is the peculiar character of the young men in Christ *to be strong;* they have learnt where their strength lays, and they put it forth. They go down to battle, not trusting in any power or might of their own, but strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He is their strength When the enemy cometh in like a flood, then to Jesus they look for safety and victory—"O our God! we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." The abiding sense of their own weakness keeps them dependent upon him, so that the more they feel of

their helplessness, the stronger they grow; because they live more upon Christ for strength, which illustrates that seeming paradox of the apostle, "When I am weak, then am I strong,"—when I am most sensible of my own weakness, then am I strongest in the Lord; his strength is then perfected in me. And his strength is put forth in the effectual working of it by believing. It is not, neither can it be, inherent in them, who without Christ can do nothing; but it is brought in by faith; nor does faith bring it in to lodge it or lay it up in store till it shall be wanted: but when it is wanted, faith then regards the promise, looks up to Christ to fulfil it, and receives strength out of his fulness. And being his, freely promised, and freely given, it is therefore called the strength of grace: "Thou therefore, my son," says Paul to Timothy, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Strong faith gets strong grace from Christ, according as it is written: "All things are possible to him that believeth;" for according to his faith it shall be done unto him. If his faith reach to the full extent of the promises, he shall find all things possible which God hath promised, yea, he shall be able to do all things through Christ strengthening him.

This is the life of these young men in Christ. They are strong in him, living upon his promised strength, and by faith receiving it. They live not upon any thing in themselves, but whatever they stand in need of, and whatever they have a promise for, that they expect shall be given them by the power of God their Saviour. They see themselves poor helpless creatures, full of continual wants, and no means in their own power to supply them. The sense of this empties them of self-greatness and self-dependence, and the abiding sense of this keeps them humble and dependent upon Christ. Thus the Lord teaches them how to live out of themselves, and to be always receiving out of the Saviour's fulness grace for grace. They have his infinite store-house to repair to, in which there is treasured up for them every thing that they can possibly want. Happy for them, their God has promised to supply all their need out of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus! and by faith they have an abundant supply, to the praise of that God who keepeth his promise for ever.

In him they live—he is the Lord and giver of spiritual life; as Paul says—"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." They are made strong in him. "The Lord is the strength of my life," says the Psalmist, Psal. xxvii. 1; that life which I live by the faith of the Son of God has all its strength from him.

And is continued by his power—"For none can keep alive his own soul," Psal. xxii. 29. "It is God who holdeth our soul in life," Psal. lxvi. 9.

And is kept by faith—"Ye are kept by the power of God through faith," 1 Pet. i. 5. Whatever strength the believer wants to enable him to bear hardship, endure the cross, fight his spiritual enemies, daily gain victories over them, he expects it from God, and through faith he receives it, and is kept—yea, so kept, As to be confirmed unto the end. He that is able to keep believers from falling, will keep them until they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Thus the life which Christ begins by his grace he continues by his strength; and every act of this spiritual life is from him. The will, the power is his; for he doeth all, and in all. These young men were so well assured of this, that they lived upon Christ for strength, and they received it; they were strong in him. Their faith viewed him in his exalted state with all power in heaven and earth, and engaged as their covenant head to use it for them; to make them, and to keep them, alive to God. On this power they depended. And whatever promise they had of its being used in their behalf, and pleaded it out at the throne of grace, and trusted Christ with the fulfilling of it, he never disappointed them. They were made strong, and stood fast in the Lord, who never withdrew his supporting arm; therefore they never ceased to put their whole trust and confidence in him.

When the enemy sees them thus strong in the Lord through faith, it stirs up his devilish malice, and makes him burn with envious rage. He leaves no temptation untried to draw them from Christ. He is well skilled in cunning wiles and sly devices for this purpose. He does not begin with tempting them to open sin; that would at once discover his wicked design; but he artfully tries to sap the foundation, and to weaken their faith. If he can get them from their

dependence upon Christ, he carries his point; and too, too often he succeeds Oh! beware, reader, of every thing; suspect it, let its appearance be ever so fair and good, which in the least tends to weaken thy fast hold of Christ. Cleave to him with full purpose of heart, as long as ever thou livest; for the enemy's whole plan is to separate thee from him. Formerly he tried to do this by distressing thee about thy sins—how they could be pardoned—whether being so great, so many, the blood of Christ could cleanse from all: now thou hast, through believing, received forgiveness of sins, he will try to do the same by distressing thee about thy duties. Sometimes he will try to bring guilt into thy conscience by suggesting to thee thy many failings and short comings in them—the disorder of thine imagination—thy wanderings in thy prayers—thy dulness in hearing and reading the word—the little life and power thou findest in thine attendance upon the ordinances—and the coldness of thy love to God and man. If he can get thee to dwell upon these things so as to forget Christ, then he has made way for this insinuation—How could it be thus with thee, and thou a strong believer? And if he can get thee to reason upon it, then he has thee fast; thou art caught in his snare.

But if the Lord has taught thee not to be ignorant of Satan's devices, as soon as the thought arises, whether thou art in Christ, because of such failings, thou wilt know from what quarter it comes, and wilt immediately resist it. So that the temptation will make thee stand faster; it will drive thee closer to Christ, make thy dependence stronger on his blood and righteousness, put thee upon making more use of him as thy intercessor and advocate with the Father, and help thee to live more out of thyself by faith upon him. Thus Christ becomes precious; thou art more humble. The snare is broken, and thou art delivered.

When the enemy sees this, his implacable malice will soon tempt thee again. He has another deep-laid stratagem relating to thy duties; and that is from their being unsuccessful. Thou hast had something laid much upon thy heart, and thou hast carried it to God in prayer, and thou hast waited long, but no answer comes. Upon this Satan takes occasion to suggest—Now you see God does not give you what you ask, although he has promised, Ask and ye shall have; the fault cannot be in him, therefore it is plain you are not in his favour; his promises do not belong to you. And if he can thus work a little upon thy impatience, he will soon get thee into doubting and unbelief. Here thou mayest see how all the wiles of Satan tend to one point; namely, to separate thee from Christ; and how necessary then is it, that thou shouldest have this settled beyond all question, that Christ and thou are one? If this be maintained in thy conscience, then Satan's stratagem is defeated: for Christ being thine, he will give thee every thing that he has promised; and although thou hast it not just at the time thou hast fixed thyself, yet he knows best. Thou shalt certainly have it, if his infinite wisdom sees it good for thee; and if he does not see it good, his love will give thee something better. Thy faith must wait God's time. Strong faith can wait long. Having such a promise as this to depend upon—they shall not be "ashamed who wait for me," Isa. xlix. 23; thou mayest with confidence wait, and be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises; who by faith regarded the promises, by patience waited for the fulfilling of them; and although they waited long, yet they succeeded at last, and did inherit every grace and blessing, for which with faith and patience they had been waiting. Go, and do thou likewise.

Upon the failing of these temptations, the enemy has another ready. Since he cannot get thee off thy guard by bringing thee into doubting and unbelief, he will attack thy faith in another way. He will come like an angel of light, and seem to be Christ's friend and thine. He will allow thee to be a child of God, and to be strong in faith. The more clearly thou art satisfied of thy union with Christ, the more will he improve, if thou art not aware, this thy certainty to his own wicked purposes. He will try to keep thine eye upon thy great graces and high gifts; he will flatter thee exceedingly upon them, and will tempt thee to view them with a secret delight; every now and then insinuating, what a great Christian thou art—how few there are like thee—to what an exalted state thou hast attained—what temptations thou hast overcome—what victories thou hast gained over Satan—and how safe thou art now, fast upon the rock! And if he

finds this pleasing bait is not instantly rejected with a Get thee behind me, Satan; then he will begin to work upon thy self-love, and to give thee many plausible reasons for self-admiration, so that thou shalt first look pleasing at, then fondly love, and at last sacrilegiously dote upon thy wondrous attainments. Thus he will lift thee up with pride, and will try to draw thee into his own crime, and into his own condemnation. What a dangerous temptation is this! How many have I known who fell into it! If thou sayest, By what means shall I escape it? Mind the first approach; for it is coming upon thee, as soon as thou beginnest to think of thyself more highly than thou oughtest to think. Thou art in thyself a poor, miserable, helpless sinner, and to this very moment without Christ thou canst do nothing. Thou canst not do one good thing, nor overcome the weakest enemy, nor take one step in the way to heaven, without Christ: nay thou canst not think one good thought without him. What hast thou, then, to be proud of, and to stir up thy self-admiration? Nothing but sin. The humble abiding sense of this tends to thy safety: for while this is ever present with thee, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," it will lead thee to live by faith upon Christ for all good things. And being all his, and received every moment from him as his free gift, thou wilt be glorifying and exalting him in all and for all, knowing that he resisteth the proud; but he giveth grace unto the humble. The Lord keep thee humble, and then thou wilt have grace to escape this cunning wile of the devil.

If thou shalt say, Alas! I am fallen into it: how shall I recover myself? Remember his case who in his prosperity said he never should be moved; the favour of the Lord had made his mountain to stand so strong, Ps. xxx. vi. 7. He was too confident in himself, and was moved. How did he recover his standing? "I cried unto the Lord, and unto the Lord I made my supplication. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me, Lord, be thou my helper." His prayer was heard, he found mercy to pardon his offence, and help to raise him up, and his mourning, he says, was turned into joy and gladness. Look up as he did to the Lord Christ. Plead thy pardon through his promised mercy, and beg of him to enable thee to walk more humbly with thy God. Then shall the Psalmist's experience be thine, and thou shalt escape the snare which was laid for thy precious life.

These young men having thus overcome the devices which Satan had contrived to weaken their faith, must expect a fresh attack from him. He will tempt them concerning the ground of faith. He sees they are strong, because the word of God abideth in them, therefore he will use all his cunning and power to weaken their trust in the word and promises of God. By the incorruptible seed of the word faith is begotten, and by the same word it is nourished up, and strengthening, growing exceedingly from faith to faith. The word, which is the sole ground of faith, reveals the covenant made by the eternal Trinity for the salvation of sinners, and makes many free promises of every covenant blessing to him that believeth. These promises may most steadfastly be relied upon, because of the unchangeable nature of God, who makes them. All his perfections are engaged for the fulfilling of his word: so that what he has spoken has an actual being and existence. He says, and it is done—saying and doing are the same with him. Let there be ever so great a distance of time between the word spoken and the thing done, yet this is real as any thing now in being; because it exists in the mind and will of God, is revealed in his word, and by his faithfulness and almighty power is to be established at the time appointed. How is it possible, then, that this word should be broken? There is no matter of fact of more undoubted evidence, nothing in futurity, not even the rising of the sun to-morrow, so fixed and certain as the accomplishment of God's promises to him that believeth. These young men in Christ were most assuredly persuaded of this truth—They knew that heaven and earth should pass away before one tittle of God's promises should fail. They looked upon them all as made in Christ, in him Yea and in him Amen, made in him, and fulfilled to him, as the head of the body of the church, and in him fulfilled to all his members. As certainly as every one of them has been made good to him the head, so will they be made good to his members. He has all power in heaven and earth committed to him

for that very purpose. Whoever by believing is joined to him, he has thereby a right and title to every promise, and may boldly sue it out in time of need. and then it is Christ's office and glory to fulfil the promise. If mountains of difficulties stand in the way, the believer need not fear or doubt. Christ is upon the throne. What are difficulties against his almighty power? Besides, Christ has already given him good security. He has put into his hands the pledges and earnests of the promised inheritance, and how is it possible he should fail in fulfilling his engagements, and putting him in due time into actual possession? Read what the apostle says of this subject. Turn to the passage; for it is too long to quote, Heb. vi. from verse 11 to the end of the chapter; in which you may observe these particulars.

1. The heirs of promise are apt to be full of doubt, and to have strife in their consciences, about their right and title to all the graces and blessings of salvation:

2. God was willing out of his infinite mercy to establish their right and title to them beyond dispute, and to put an end to all strife;

3. Therefore he engaged by promise to give them all those graces and blessings; and

4. To show the unchangeableness of his will herein, he confirmed the promise by an oath.

5. It is impossible that God should lie in his promise, or that he should be perjured in his oath.

6. Therefore here are two immutable things to strengthen the faith and hopes of the heirs of promise.

7. While their faith rests upon those immutable things, it will always bring them strong consolation.

8. When enemies, dangers, and temptations attack them, they are safe, by fleeing for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them in God's immutable promises.

9. This hope will be as useful to them at such times as an anchor to a ship. By it they will ride out all the storms of life, until Jesus their forerunner bring them within the veil, where their anchor is now cast, and put them into eternal possession of all the promises.

With what rich and copious matter does this scripture abound, tending to show the absolute safety of resting upon God's promises! How strong are the arguments to persuade the heirs of promise to put their whole trust and confidence in the faithfulness of their God! who, having provided an infinitely glorious and everlasting inheritance for them, was willing to make it over to them in the strongest manner of conveyance, and therefore he has given them the promise and the oath of God, which cannot possibly change or alter, that their faith might never doubt or waver, and their hope might at all times be sure and stedfast. And until he bring them to the inheritance itself, he has given them many sweet and blessed promises of all things needful for their temporal and spiritual estate, upon which he would have them not only to live comfortably at present, but also to receive them as part of the inheritance, allowed them for their maintenance, till they come to age and enter upon the possession of the whole. And what God intended in his promise and oath, has its effects in a good degree among those who have the word of God abiding in them. They cast their anchor where he commands them, and they are not only safe, but also in time of the greatest troubles and temptations have strong consolation. When enemies come, corruptions arise, and difficulties are in the way; they have a promise, and a promise-keeping God to depend upon. Whatever straits they are in, the word abiding in them brings some promise of support and deliverance: the promise shows what God has engaged to do, and faith receives the fulfilling of his engagements. When they draw nigh to God in duties, in ordinances, they know what he has promised to them that wait upon him, and they judge him faithful who hath promised, and lo! he is present with them. In short, while they live like themselves as the heirs of promise, they are preserved from all evil, and want no manner of thing that is good. This is their happy case; thrice happy, because the means used to deprive them of their happiness are overruled of God for

the establishing it. The enemy rages against them, but in vain. He was a liar from the beginning. The word is truth, and he abode not in it, therefore he hates it, and with a greater hatred because the Lord has made it the means of strengthening those believers. He knows that all his temptations will be fruitless, while the word abideth in them. He fears no weapon formed against him, like the sword of the Spirit: he has felt its sharpness and its power; with it the Captain of our salvation cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon; and with it all his good soldiers resist the devil, and make him flee from them. For these reasons he has a great variety of temptations to weaken the believer's trust in the word, and his reliance upon the promises of God.

Sometimes he attacks them in a matter where his hopes are founded in their ignorance: he is cunning to spy out the particular way in which they have been led, and their readiness to maintain their ground by making use of the promises suited to that way. He resolves therefore upon some new temptation, with which they have never been exercised; and he watches the favourable opportunity to inject it with all his strength. Upon his doing it, the soul is put into a great hurry, because it has no promise ready to apply to the present case; for want of which the understanding is confused, faith wavers, doubt enters, and Satan carries his point. This demonstrates the necessity of searching the scriptures, and meditating upon them night and day. In them God has graciously treasured up all sorts of promises. There is not a possible case for a believer to be in, of spiritual or temporal concern, but there is a promise suitable to it, which he ought to have ready against the hour of temptation. If he has not, he neglects the Lord's kind provision, and lays himself open to the enemy's attack. Reader! if thou wouldst not be ignorant of Satan's devices, follow Christ's counsel—search the scriptures. Remember, they are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus: therefore, store up his promises; pray him to sanctify thy memory to retain them, and to enable thee to make use of them in every time of need.

If this temptation fail, the enemy will soon have another ready. I have known him often try, and often succeed in endeavouring to take off the attention from the most easy parts of scripture, and to fix it upon those parts which are hard to be understood. Upon those the believer dwells too much, and puzzles himself: his head grows confused: he consults commentators, and they confuse him more. And if he does not fall from hence into questioning the truth of scripture, yet he certainly neglects the right use of it, forgetting it is the means of building himself up in his most holy faith. Reader! whenever thou art tempted about difficult texts, look up to the incarnate Word, and pray him by his Spirit to open thine understanding, that thou mayest know what thou readest; and if thou still dost not find the meaning of them made plain to thee, pass them by for that time. Do not puzzle and distress thyself about them. Perhaps, when thou meetest with them again, they will appear easy, and Christ will give thee light to see and to comprehend them.

If thou sayest, I do look up to him to teach me, but, nevertheless, I find many hard and difficult texts. Remember thou knowest but in part, and therefore thou standest in need of daily teaching. These texts are profitable, if they humble thee, and make thee live more upon the teaching of the divine prophet. The humbler thou art, thou wilt be the more teachable. The lower thou sittest at his feet to hear his words, thou wilt learn the most. The master himself has declared, "Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." If these difficult texts thus humble thee, and make thee live more upon Christ's inward teaching, they will be the means of thy growth in saving knowledge. Thy hearing and reading the word, in a constant dependence upon him, will keep thee from the dangerous errors and heresies of the times. Most of those arise from unlearned and unstable men, full of pride and self-conceit, whom God resisteth; but he giveth grace to the humble.

If he has given thee grace to hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast learned and been assured of, the enemy will change his attack, and pursue thee with new temptations. Envious of thy happiness, he will be often assault-

ing thee, and trying to move thee from thy steadfastness. He will at times insinuate every lie that he can raise against the word of God; and he will not begin with reason or argument, but by way of surprise, with sudden injections darting into the mind doubts like these: How do I know the scripture is inspired? What proof have I? And if these be not immediately rejected, he will follow them like lightning with others. How can that be inspired which is full of contradictions, and full of doctrines above reason? Who can defend the matters of fact related in it? The language is low and mean, unworthy of God; the scripture is false; perhaps there is neither God nor devil.

These blasphemous thoughts sometimes put the believer into a hurry and confusion, and through the suddenness and violence of them greatly distress him. The apostle calls these assaults "the fiery darts of the wicked one"—darts, because he throws them with all his might against the soul, and fiery, because he would have them to catch hold of and to inflame its corruptions and lusts. And they do, if the shield of faith be not ready to stop their force and to quench their fire. This is a piece of the armour of God prepared for the believer's safety at such times; and the right use of it is this: The Lord having promised to be a shield to them that put their trust in him, and to compass them about with his favour as with a shield, the believer looks up when these fiery darts are flying thick about him, and says,—"O Lord God of hosts, who hast promised that thy faithfulness and truth should be my shield and buckler, now establish thy word unto thy servant. In thee, O my God, do I put my trust, save me in this hour of temptation." Then the battle becomes the Lord's. He is engaged to put forth his strength to shield thee from the enemy. Thus thou shalt conquer, and shalt happily experience what is written—"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

He will flee for a season, but will return again. He has other temptations, and he will try them all to disparage the word of God, and to lessen the believer's confidence in it. Sometimes he will insinuate, How can these things be?—in what way or by what means can such a promise be fulfilled? If you begin to reason upon the point, he will get you from your stronghold, and conquer you. Beware of his lies, and have always your answer ready—"It is written." What God hath said, put your trust in, if all the world gainsay it; for he is faithful who hath promised, and all things are possible with him.

If this temptation does not succeed, and he cannot bring you to doubt of the truth of the promises, then he will try you about your right to them. When you are in darkness, or walking heavily in sickness or any trouble, and you have been praying for deliverance, but Christ does not presently answer you, then he has a favourable opportunity to suggest—Now you see the promises do not belong to you; Christ will not hear you; and therefore you have been deceiving yourself with a vain notion of faith. This is a common temptation, against which still oppose—"It is written." Thy case, be it what it will, has a promise, either of support or deliverance. If thou art not delivered, yet if Christ support thee, so that thy faith and patience fail not, does not this show his infinite goodness to thee? He will have thy faith tried, and he will put it into the fire, not to consume it, but that it may come, like gold out of the furnace, purer and brighter. And what if thou art in the fire a great while? thou wilt see more of his tender mercies in keeping thee there, and wilt thereby learn to live in a more simple dependence upon him. Cast not away, therefore, thy confidence in the written word. The promises in it stand faster than the strong mountains. If all the powers in earth and hell should join, they cannot defeat one single tittle of them. When the world and all the works therein shall be burnt up, and the place of them shall be no more found, then the promises shall stand fast as the throne of God, and shall receive their full and perfect accomplishment through the ages of eternity.

These are some of Satan's temptations against the young men in Christ, who are strong, because the word of God abideth in them. His design is to weaken their reliance upon its promises. Till he can do this, he despairs of success; and therefore he tries every method which his wicked cunning and rage can invent. His busy, active spirit is night and day plotting against the word of God. See a lively picture of his utter hatred to it in the parable of the sower While

the good seed is sowing, the devil is indefatigable in picking it up. He exercises all his wiles to keep it out of the hearers' hearts, and he prevails with the greater part to reject it: among those who seemingly receive it, he cheats three out of four, so that the word does not take root, nor bear fruit to perfection. Since Satan is thus successful, is it not absolutely necessary, reader, that thou shouldst be well acquainted with his devices? And the word abiding in thee—the ingrafted word—will both make thee acquainted with them, and also strong to resist them; because then thou wilt be taught by Christ's wisdom, and strengthened by his almighty power. As thou growest in the sense of thy want of him, and livest in a closer dependence upon him, thou wilt understand more of his word, and experience more of his power: by which means the enemy's continual attacks, driving thee to Christ for the fulfilling of his promises, will make thee continually safe. Let the roaring lion rage; what hast thou to fear? Let him go about seeking whom he may devour; the Lord is thy shield and thy defence: in him is thy trust. Thou hast his promise that he will preserve thee from all evil, and will make all things, even Satan's spite and rage against thee, work together for thy good. How dear and precious, then, should the word of God be to thee! If thou art weak, because it is the means of thy growing, and being nourished up; and if thou art strong, because, by its abiding in thee, thou wilt be established. May it be thy study and thy delight; and may every reading of it bring thee to a better acquaintance with, and a greater dependence upon, the adorable Jesus! And if thou desirest thus to profit from the scriptures, I would advise thee, reader, to observe two things, which will be much for Christ's glory and for thy edification.

First, in thy frequent and careful perusal of the Bible (and mind, thou canst not read it too much) take particular notice of the promises, which are most suited to thy age, state, and condition in life; because these God has graciously made for thy use; and about these the enemy will be most busy with thee. Treasure them up, then, in thy memory, and have them ready against the time of need; looking up,

Secondly, to Christ for the fulfilling of them. All the promises are made in him, and made good by him: thou art, therefore, in a humble dependence upon his faithfulness and power, to expect whatever thou wantest and he has promised. Trust him, and he will not fail thee. Stagger not at any of his promises through the seeming impossibility of their being made good; but depend upon his almighty power, and thou wilt find him a faithful, promise-keeping God, whose word standeth fast for ever and ever.

Thus thou shalt not only be safe, but shalt also overcome the wicked one, which the apostle John makes the last part of their character who are strong in the Lord. They overcome him by the strength of their faith; they hold fast their confidence in the Lord's promised strength; and he fights for them. That mighty arm, which bruised the serpent's head, brings them victory; as it is written of that noble army, mentioned Rev. xii. 11: "They overcame the accuser of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Through faith in his blood they were pardoned and justified freely, and they knew that in him they had righteousness and strength; therefore they were at peace with God, and the accuser of the brethren could not lay any thing to their charge. Thus they were delivered from his power, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and they testified this by adhering to the word of truth. They believed that whatever Christ had therein promised he would fulfil to them, and they bore their testimony to their being safe in depending upon his word in the most trying circumstances. They would not give it up, whatever they lost for trusting to it; nay, they stuck stedfastly to its truth, although it cost them their lives for maintaining their testimony; for it is said of them, "they loved not their lives unto the death;" that is, they loved the truth more than life; they were not afraid publicly to own that their trust and confidence was in the blood of the Lamb, and they believed they should be infinite and everlasting gainers by holding fast the word of their testimony unto death. And the Lord was with them, and mightily strengthened them, so that they joyfully sealed their testimony with their blood, although hey died in flames, and in the most ex-

quisite torments. Thus they overcame Satan. A most noble company of those conquerors are now standing round the throne of the Lamb, enjoying his exceeding great and precious promises: he has crowned them with glory—he has clothed them with robes washed and made white in his own blood—he has wiped away all tears from their eyes, and taken all cause of sorrow from their hearts—he has put palms into their hands, to show that they are eternal conquerors, and that they shall stand confirmed in bliss for ever and ever. May thou and I, reader, ere long, join them; and until that happy time come, may our faith be daily more established in the blood and righteousness of the Lamb of God, that we may be growing in our love to him, and in our dependence upon him, until he admit us to see him as he is.

Through much exercise and fighting, these young men, strong and mighty in the scriptures, grow up to be fathers in Christ; whose character is thus drawn by the apostle John, 1 Epist. ii. 14: "I have written unto you fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning," namely, Jesus Christ, whose style and title it is to be from the beginning, as he himself speaks in Prov. viii. 22, 23: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." He was a person in the Godhead, coequal and coeternal with the Father, but was set up in his office-character from everlasting to the beginning of the ways and works of God. Upon account of what he was to do and suffer in man's nature according to the grace of the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity, he was the Creator, and is the Preserver of the universe; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; and by him all things subsist; and he is the beginning, the first cause of all things in nature, and also in grace, the head of the body the church. In the same manner our Lord speaks of himself, Rev. i. 8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." He is in and from the beginning, being the first cause of all the divine works in creation, in providence, and in redemption, the Author and the Finisher, the First and the Last in all; which shows the great propriety of describing him here by this name. The apostle is treating of the highest state of a believer, and he says it consists in knowing that Jesus Christ is all and in all. Whatever good there is in his kingdom of nature, from him it had its beginning, and by him it is preserved: whatever good there is in his kingdom of grace, he is the author of it; by his power it is continued; and when brought to perfection, he is the finisher. He is the beginning, he is the ending, of all the counsels and of all the works of God. In this light these fathers had learned to consider the Lord Jesus: they knew that he was to do all for them, and in them, and by them; they not only knew it speculatively, but had also experimental knowledge of it. "Ye have known him that is from the beginning;" have known him, and tried him, and found him to be what his name signifies. And this is the right knowledge of Christ—not such as the devil has; he could say, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God—not such as too many nominal Christians have, who profess that they know God, but in works they deny him—not such as many professors attain, for whom it had been better not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they had known it, to turn from it. These fathers knew Christ by the inward teaching of his Word and Spirit, whereby he made himself known to them, as he does not to others. For he fulfilled to them the great promise of the new covenant—"I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God," Jer. xxiv. 7. The covenant is well ordered in all things, and sure, particularly with respect to the quickening of the soul from a death in trespasses and sins, and to the renewing of its faculties, that they may be capable of knowing God, and to the enlightening them, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may shine unto them, even unto the heart, enlivening it with holy and heavenly affection to the person, to the offices, and to the glories of the blessed Immanuel. Whereby the believer, thus taught of God to know him aright, can now trust him, hope in him, and love him; which graces are strengthened from the consideration of God's standing related to him as his cove-

nant God, and of his being one of God's redeemed people; from which relations he has a right to, and by faith may enjoy, every covenant mercy in time, and shall be a partaker of them all in eternity. This is the knowledge, concerning which so many and such great things are spoken in scripture, and which St. John says these fathers had received: they had attained by the Spirit of Wisdom and revelation to that knowledge of Christ, which is life eternal; and the same Spirit enabled them to be continually growing and increasing in the knowledge of Christ. As he shines more clearly into their hearts, he discovers to them more of their wants. He makes them better acquainted with themselves, and lets them feel more of the workings of their corrupt nature, and of their own entire helplessness. Thus by his light they see deeper into that mystery of iniquity which is in them, and they grow in the sense and experience of it all their lives. Day by day some failing, short-coming, infirmity, or temptation, leads them to more lowly and humbling views of themselves, and brings them fresh discoveries of their fallen and helpless state. While they attend to what is passing in their own breasts, every moment something will be speaking for Christ—"Without me ye can do nothing." It is this abiding sense of their wants, and faith in his promises to supply them, which lead them to be constantly looking unto Jesus. Many wants do not discourage them; for his promises are as many as their wants can be—nor great wants, for he has given them exceeding great promises—nor continual wants, for he has promised them grace every moment. As they grow in the knowledge of themselves, they see more need of living upon Christ in the several offices which he sustains. The daily experience which they have of their own ignorance, and sinfulness, and helplessness, endear to them their divine Prophet, Priest, and King. The continual sense of their want of him makes them glad to live in a settled, fixed dependence upon his fulness, and to be always receiving out of it. They would not live otherwise if they could. They know that their dear Saviour will manage better for them than they could for themselves. He has taken their affairs, spiritual and temporal, into his hands, and he can make no mistakes. His infinite love is guided by unerring wisdom, and its blessings are bestowed by almighty power. Happy for them, they and theirs are under the care of this best of friends. They know it, and are sensible of their happiness. Daily experience brings them fresh proofs of the love and power of Jesus; which makes them wish for more, still more faith, that they may glorify their blessed Saviour by trusting him more. However, in this they are growing, increasing day by day, in their knowledge of the salvation, and gaining a closer acquaintance and fellowship with the person of God their Saviour, until they come to see him as he is.

This is the character of those believers who are stedfast in the faith, and are become fathers, able now to teach others also. They have attained to that knowledge of Christ which is life eternal, and they are daily pressing forward. What they already know of him increases their desire to know more. And by being always conversant with him (for without him they can do nothing) they have continual opportunities of making new discoveries. In him are laid up treasures of every thing that is great and good. His riches are unsearchable, infinite, and eternal. There is no coming to the end of them. Believers are persuaded of it, and therefore they try to dig deep into this golden mine. It is all theirs. The farther they go, the more is their faith strengthened, and the more precious Christ becomes: for they find such an excellency in the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, that their souls hunger and thirst to know more of him. The more they attain, the more the appetite increases; and nothing can perfectly satisfy it but the full enjoyment of Christ in glory, when they shall know, even as also they are known. Till that blessed time come, they will be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of God their Saviour.

This is the distinguishing mark of these fathers:—they are pressing forward; they have not yet attained to the perfect knowledge of Christ, but they are going on to perfection; and they make a happy progress. God meets them in, and blesses, the means which he has appointed for their daily growth. In those he requires them to depend and to wait upon him; and he gives them clearer discoveries of the adorable person, and of the gracious offices of the Lord Christ,

and thereby enables them to live more by faith upon him, for all things belonging to their temporal, their spiritual, and their eternal concerns. These particulars will include the principal acts of the life of faith; and, while we take a short view of them, reader, may every page be made the means of increasing and strengthening thy faith in the Lord Jesus!

First, they grow in the knowledge of his person, which is altogether wonderful; so that they can never come to the end of his perfections, nor, to eternity, can they show forth all his praise; for he is God and man in one Christ—Jehovah incarnate—Immanuel, God with us. This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh; in which he came amongst us, that he might be the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven; that as the first Adam by sin had ruined all those who are born of him after the flesh, so the second Adam might save all those who are born of him after the Spirit. And for this end he has all power in heaven and earth committed to him; he has all fulness, yea, the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, that he might be the head of the body, the church, and that out of his fulness his members might be receiving grace in time and glory in eternity. Of this divine Person all the prophets have spoken since the world began: and what they have spoken in many words the apostle sums up in a short description, Col. i. 15, &c., where he is treating of that Person in the Godhead who covenanted to come into the world to save sinners: "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the Head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." In which words these three glorious truths are declared of Christ Jesus: first, that he created all things visible and invisible; secondly, that he upholds them all by the word of his power; thirdly, that he has redeemed unto himself a peculiar people through his own blood, who are his church: and he is to them what the head is to the body, the head of authority, the first in rank and dignity, and the head of influence, from whom life and motion and sense are communicated to all his members: for in him they live and move and have their being. In all things he is first, or has the pre-eminence; he is Jehovah the Creator and the Preserver of all things, Jehovah incarnate, the Head of his church, and the Saviour of the body. This is the blessed object of faith: and what can there be conceived beautiful, useful, or happy, what excellency is there or perfection, which is not in its highest degree in this most adorable God-man? What can a believer want, what can his heart desire, which is not here treasured up for his use? Here is a surety perfectly qualified, as man to act and suffer for man, as God to merit infinitely and eternally by what he did and suffered, and as God-man he has now all fulness of wisdom, and righteousness, and holiness, and strength, and every thing needful for his people's happiness. Whither then should they go but to him, for every grace and blessing? And to him they do repair, according to the command—"Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," Isa. xlv. 22. The promise to them who are looking unto him, is very extensive—"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," Phil. iv. 19. By him they expect a continual supply of all temporal and spiritual needs, and therefore on him they would have their eyes ever fixed, looking unto Jesus. While by faith their eyes are kept steady upon him, they will be discovering something new in this wonderful God-man, and receiving something out of his fulness, to strengthen their hopes, and to inflame their affections. He will grow more lovely in their sight; fresh beauties will discover themselves; new worlds of delight will appear; for all the glories of heaven and earth shine in their fullest lustre in his person. The believer sees them at present; for by faith he can see Him that is invisible; and although he has not such a perfect vision as they have, who, standing round his throne, see him face to face, yet he hopes to enjoy it soon; and he has even now this peculiar pleasure

in viewing the glories of his God and Saviour, that he can truly say of him, "this is my Beloved, and my Friend;" here I fix, and on him I rest; I want to look nowhere else for any good, since it all meets and centres in one object: for it hath pleased the Father and the eternal Spirit, that all fulness should dwell in the Son of God, and he is my beloved Saviour, and my dearest Friend; he is the Chief among ten thousand in my affection, yea, he is altogether lovely. The more I live by faith upon him, the more I love him; for I experience such tender compassion in his heart, and such a kind concern for me and my interest, that the love of Christ constrains me to love him again. He endears his person to me by continual favours. I do love him, but not so much as he deserves. I would increase, and abound more and more in love to him, as his mercies increase and abound to me; but a grateful sense of them, and love to him for them are his own gifts, for which, as well as for his mercies, I must be content to be indebted to him for ever and ever. Lord, shed more of thy precious love abroad in my heart; enlarge it in true affection to thee, and make all that is within me bless thy holy name.

Reader, stop a little here, and consider: Art thou one of these believers? Hast thou a warm heart for the person of Christ? Dost thou see in him, and in its highest degree, every thing that is lovely? and art thou growing and abounding in love to him? If this be thy present happiness, thou wilt find many powerful motives to increase it in the 45th and 42d Psalms. Read them, and see whether thou canst so mix faith with what is said in them of the incarnate God, as to conclude with David, "Whom have I in heaven, but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." If thy heart be thus enamoured with his love, then thou hast got a key to the book of Canticles; for thou art the spouse of Christ. Mayest thou experience what is therein said of the glories of thy heavenly Bridegroom, and mayest thou grow in love to his adorable Person, by finding continual tokens of his love to thy soul in the several offices which he sustains for the dispensing of his favours. In these offices he is always endearing himself to his people. And this is the

Second thing, whereby the fathers in Christ grow in the knowledge of him. There is not a want which sin has brought upon believers, but there is an office in Christ, where it may be supplied; and the sense and feeling of that want leading them to trust in him upon the warrant of his word and promise, will certainly bring them a supply in the hour of need. His offices are many, but they may be all included in these five:—He is the Saviour, the Prophet, the Priest, the King, and the Advocate of his people.

The Saviour, Jesus, a dear name, descriptive of his infinite grace, and sweetly suited to the sinner's wants. Whatever pollution or guilt he has contracted, whatever misery he deserves to suffer in time or in eternity, Jesus is Jehovah, almighty to save him: for he was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins. Whatever they stand in need of to make them happy—wisdom, righteousness, holiness, comfort, or strength—it is all in the fulness of Jesus, freely promised, and by faith received; as it is written, "Ye are saved freely by grace through faith," and saved for ever: for Jesus is the Author of eternal salvation. The spirits of just men made perfect in glory are said to be crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever." So that the name Jesus is dear and precious to the saints in heaven; they are happily employed in ascribing the glory of their eternal salvation to the Lamb of God. And the believer has at present a part of their happiness; for Jesus is the Saviour. He can trust him for all the promised blessings of his salvation, and live by faith upon him for the receiving them. As, every moment, some of them are wanted, so the Saviour's love in bestowing them is more experienced; faith in him is thereby strengthened, and love to him increased: and these graces will be continually growing, while the believer views the state of guilt and misery from which Jesus has saved him, the state of safety in which he has placed him, and the blessings which he has promised him in life and death, and in eternity. Must not such a Saviour become more precious for continuing day by day such free and unmerited benefits? And who can receive them, sensible of his unworthiness, without rejoicing in such a salvation, and

admiring and adoring the goodness of the Saviour? O most blessed Jesus! increase the faith of thy people, that they may glorify thee more by depending upon thee for all the promised blessings of thy salvation. Teach them how to do this as the great

PROPHET of the house of God. This is another of his gracious offices, suited to the ignorance of his people: for when sin separated them from God, they then lost the light of life, and had no means left in their own power to discover God and the things of God. Hear what two infallible witnesses say to this fact—"There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God." Mind; here is no exception; the prophet knew not one; neither did the apostle—"All the Gentiles had the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts." To man in this state of ignorance what could be so suitable as a prophet? And what prophet like him, who, being God, is possessed of infinite wisdom, and being God-man, has that infinite wisdom for his people's use? He was made unto them wisdom, that by his divine teaching he might enlighten their understandings, and by leading them into all truth might make them wise unto salvation. He begins his teaching with discovering to them their ignorance, which is a hard lesson to learn, but he uses such mildness and gentleness with his authority, that by degrees he subdues their pride and makes them willing to sit at his feet to hear his words. This is the humble posture of all his true disciples. They receive him by faith for their teacher, convinced that without him they can learn nothing which belongs to their peace, and having been for some time under his teaching, they grow more sensible of their want of it. He discovers to them more of their ignorance, and thereby brings them to a closer dependence upon him for wisdom. And that is the way they rise in his school. Whoever is the most humble and teachable, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The abiding sense of his standing in need of the divine Prophet every moment makes him the highest scholar. And the Lord keeps him in this dependent state, waiting upon him for his continual instruction, in hearing and reading the word, and in prayer for the enlightening Spirit to make the word effectual. The great Prophet could teach without these means, but he has commanded us in the use of them to wait upon him: for in them he has promised to meet and bless his people, and for the fulfilling of this promise they wait. Christ's presence they look for in the use of all means; and they find it. He teaches them how liable they are to err, how little they know, how soon they forget; and thus they grow in a dependence upon, and in love to, their divine Teacher. And as all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, and they can know at present but in part, they therefore will be waiting upon him for more, still more knowledge; and he answers his character; he teaches them wisdom; he shows them danger, discovers to them the devices of Satan, guards them against the errors and heresies of the day, makes manifest the snares of the world, and in all respects fulfils to them the offices of an infallible prophet; for he keeps them from resting upon any false foundation, and enables them to build all their hopes of acceptance with God upon the atonement made by the high

PRIEST of our profession Christ Jesus. This is his chief office. He is our Prophet, to teach us our guilty, helpless state, and to bring us to rely upon him to save us from it, by being our Priest. We have all sinned, and have incurred the pains and penalties due to sin. We are all justly liable to the sufferings and death, to the curse, and to the separation from God, threatened in his law to transgressors; and we have no means in our own power to escape them How full, then, of grace and love was the heart of our blessed Immanuel, that he would vouchsafe to be a priest to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin? His gifts were infinitely precious: he gave himself for us—the gift of his eternal Godhead, the gift of his immaculate manhood, body and soul, in which he obeyed perfectly, and so magnified the law, that it may be eternally honourable in admitting those, who have sinned, into heaven—the gift of his prevailing prayer for all that shall believe in him to the end of the world—and the gift of his body and soul to be once offered for sin, in the place and in the stead of sinners, as it is written, "He

suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God—He died for our sins according to the scriptures—He was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, and that we who sometimes were afar off might be made nigh by his blood, and might through him have access by one Spirit unto the Father." In these most precious gifts, in this everlasting meritorious Sacrifice, consists the office of our divine priest; and upon him the believer rests. He is enabled upon this foundation to build all his hopes of acceptance. The great atonement made by Jesus' obedience unto death is all his salvation, and all his desire—all his salvation; for he looks no where else, but to Jesus, and him crucified: he depends upon nothing else to save him from suffering and death, from the curse of the law, and from being eternally separated from God. And this is all his desire—to get a closer acquaintance and more intimate communion with the crucified Jesus. This is his one study and delight: I have determined, says he, to know nothing but Jesus, by whom I have now received the atonement. God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. I would look upon all other things as dross and dung, compared to the excellency of the knowledge of that one offering, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. In this his priestly office, bleeding and dying for me, he is, beyond description, beyond conception, full of grace and truth; and daily he becomes more lovely in mine eyes. As I discover more of the exceeding sinfulness of my heart and life, my meritorious Priest grows more dear to me: I rest more safely on his atonement, satisfied of its infinite sufficiency to bring me near to God. And finding my faith and hopes established in it, and through it a free access to the Father, Jesus, the sacrificed Lamb of God, becomes day by day more precious to my heart. His blood and righteousness are the continual rejoicing of my soul. Oh! how happy am I in this my royal Priest! for now, even now, have I redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins—I am safe from the destroying angel under the blood of sprinkling, and I have also boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Daily do I experience more of the riches of his grace, comforting, strengthening, and sanctifying me through faith in his most precious blood. Through this he saves me from hell; through this he bestows upon me heaven; and for this shall be my song of everlasting praise. Unto him who hath thus exceedingly loved me, and hath washed me from my sins in his own blood, and hath made me, the vilest of sinners, a king and a priest (amazing grace!) unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

These are the breathings of the believing soul, now become well-grounded upon the atonement, and living upon the priestly office of the Lord Jesus Christ for peace and joy, and expecting to be established in them continually by his power, which makes another of his offices necessary; for some corruption or enemy, temptation or trouble, will be always trying to draw the eye of faith from looking unto Jesus the High Priest of our profession: and such is the believer's helplessness, that he could not be fixed a moment, were not Jesus a priest upon his throne, almighty to make all his enemies his footstool, and to rule in and over his people as their

KING. In this relation he exceedingly endears himself to them: for they are in themselves weak and helpless. They are without strength to resist the least temptation, or to overcome the weakest enemy. They cannot of themselves subdue one corruption, or get the victory over a single lust. Neither can they perform one act of spiritual life. They cannot make nor keep themselves alive to God by any power of their own; for without Christ they can do nothing. Most mercifully, then, is his kingly office suited to their weakness. He is the great king over all the earth, as God; but he has a peculiar rule in and over believers as God-man, the Head of the body, the church; to which he is connected by as close and near a bond as the members of the body are with the head. He is the first in dignity, as the head is, and in all things has the pre-eminence; and what the natural head is to its members, the same he is to the members of his spiritual body: for he is the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. And for the ministering of proper nourishment and influence to his members, he

has all power in heaven and earth in his hand. He is the Lord God omnipotent, whose kingdom ruleth over all. It is not an outward thing, like the kingdoms of the world; but, says he, the kingdom of God is within you. He sets it up within, in the hearts of his people, and there he sways the sceptre of his grace, subduing all the evils within, and conquering all the enemies without, by his almighty arm. He takes them and theirs under his royal protection, and manages all their matters for them, until he bring them by his power unto eternal salvation. The power is his; but by faith it becomes theirs. When they find themselves helpless and without strength, then they look up to him to make them strong in the Lord, and by faith rest upon his promised strength, and thereby receive whatever degree of it is needful at that time. Thus they live by faith upon their almighty king, and they glorify him by trusting in him for strength. By daily experience they become more sensible of their weakness, and learn to live more out of themselves upon him. They find the safety, the comfort of this. They see it is far better for them to be dependent upon Christ, that his power may rest upon them, than that they should be strong in themselves; and therefore they rejoice, they take pleasure in their own weakness, because it illustrates and magnifies the power of Christ, who does all for them, and in them.

Hear one of these happy believers thus describing his case: I was caught up, says he, into the third heavens, into paradise: and I heard there unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter; and, lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure; for this thing I besought the Lord thrice that he would take it away from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: my grace is sufficient to sanctify this cross, and to support thee under it; it will be for my glory and for thy good it should be continued; because my strength is made perfect in weakness:—the weaker thou art, the more will thy strength be magnified in bearing thee up, until faith and patience have their perfect work. This divine answer from my Lord and king satisfied me, and I have for fourteen years had sweet experience of the truth of it. I am a witness to the all-sufficiency of Jesus' grace; but never have I found so much of it, as when I have been the most helpless in myself; and therefore most gladly will I glory in my infirmities and weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, that his power may be continually glorified by my continually depending upon him for it; and that I may have fresh evidence of Christ's power working mightily in me. Since the Lord is thus become my strength, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, in whatever I suffer for him and his cause: for when I am weak, then am I strong—weak in myself, strong in the Lord; stronger in him the more sensible I am of my own weakness, and then strongest of all, when, finding I can do nothing, I live by faith upon him to do all for me. In this state of weakness and dependence I glory; I take perfect pleasure in it; because it honours the kingly office of my Lord Christ, and makes it plain to myself and others that he keeps me every moment by his mighty power: for since I can do nothing, the excellency of the power which does all in me and by me appears evidently to be of God, and not of man.

Reader, is not this a happy case? Is not that man blessed whose strength is in the Lord, and who can say in faith, Surely in the Lord have I strength? And what hinders thee from being as strong in the Lord as Paul was? Thou hast the same promises, the same God and Saviour to fulfil them; and, for thy greater encouragement to live upon him by faith, for the fulfilling of them to thee, he has another office, in which he condescends to be thy

ADVOCATE, freely to take thy cause in hand, and to see it carried in the court of heaven. In this character he would represent himself, as having undertaken to answer all charges against thee, from whatever quarter they come, and to obtain for thee every blessing promised in his word, and for which thou appliest to him by faith in the time of need. In this amiable light he would have to consider him as thy daysman, to whom, being thy Saviour and thy

Friend, thou mayest safely refer thy cause, as the Mediator between God and man, who will transact all thy matters for thee with the Father, and as thy Intercessor, who appears in the presence of God for thee, that every blessing of his salvation may be thine. Under these names the scripture describes the advocateship of the Lord Christ; which office he sustains for thy sake, to encourage thee to come with boldness to the throne of his grace. Thou hast a friend there, who is bound hy his word, and also by his office, to see that thou want no manner of thing which is good; and although all things seem to make against thee, and thou canst find no human means of obtaining the promised good, which thou wantest, then look up to the Lord Jesus. Thou wilt glorify him at such a time, if thou canst trust in his intercession, and if the workings of thy faith be such as these—

Although I am less than the least of God's mercies, a vile sinner, and to this moment an unprofitahle servant, deserving for my very best works and duties to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; yet, glory be to his infinite grace! I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and he is the Propitiation for my sins. All the blessings which he has promised to give his dear people, as their Saviour, their Prophet, Priest, and King, he is my Advocate with the Father to obtain for me:—a righteous Advocate, who asks nothing but what he has a right to, and who never asks in vain. It hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in the Head of the body, the church; and it pleaseth him that the members should, from the fulness of their Head, receive abundantly all the influence they want; for the Father himself loveth them, and out of his infinite love gave his Son to be their head, that he might fill all in all of them. What, then, may not I expect from such an Advocate with such a Father? Already have I received so much, that I know Jesus appears in the presence of God for me. I can trust my cause in his hands. He has taught me to leave all my matters to his management, and I desire more simply to resign them up to him. I find every thing goes on well which is left to his direction, and nothing miscarries but what I undertake without him. Oh for more faitn! The Lord increase it, that my precious Advocate may be more glorified by my trusting him more, and that he may have all the honour of conducting my affairs, spiritual and temporal, in earth and heaven, in time and in eternity: Even so be it, Lord Jesus.

After the believer has been taught thus to trust the Lord Christ, and to expect that grace which, in his several offices, he is engaged to give, then his conversation will be well ordered: and as he daily grows in faith and dependence upon Christ, he will walk more in the comfort of the Holy Ghost: his outward as well as inward matters will come under the influence of grace, and will be left to the direction and government of the Lord Jesus, which is another excellency of the life of faith, and which renders it infinitely preferable to any other way of living.

The state of the case is this: Christ has all power in heaven and earth given unto him. As God-man he has a mediatorial kingdom, which ruleth over all created beings and things; for they subsist by the word of his power, and are upheld by his providence, so that whatever, in his infinite love and wisdom, he sees best for his people, he is almighty to bestow it on them. They can want no promised good, nor suffer any outward evil; but he is able to give the one, and to deliver from the other. Their wants are many, their sufferings great. Sin has brought disorder upon the whole creation. The outward state of man in the world is full of misery, not only following him, but also in him, in his very frame and constitution; pain, sickness, mortality in his body, emptiness in his enjoyments, disappointments, losses, worldly cares, something or other, in body or estate, troubling him; for man is born to trouble. What manner of love, then, is this, that God our Saviour would take these things under his government, and manage them for the good of his people, whom he would have to be happy in him in this world, as well as in the next. He has given them many great and precious promises relating to the life that now is, and he is faithful who hath promised to supply their earthly wants, to sanctify their sufferings, and to make all things work together under him for their

good He has kindly undertaken their temporal as well as their spiritual concerns; for nothing was left out of the covenant of grace. It was ordered in ALL things. The outward state and condition of believers, their poverty or riches, health or sickness, trials of every kind, how great they should be, how long they should continue, are all appointed and unalterably fixed; nothing left for chance to do. When the Lord God determined to bring many sons unto glory through Christ Jesus, the means by which he intended to bring them unto that end were in his purpose as well as the end itself; therefore all things were ordered and made sure, even to the very hairs of their head; for they are all numbered. What a continual source of comfort is this to believers! Their present happiness is provided for, as well as their eternal, in the covenant of grace. God is become their God, has made himself known to them in this covenant-relation, and has thereby bound himself to give whatever he sees will be the best for them. But because he knoweth their frame, and how apt they are, under hard and long trials of faith, to be discouraged, he has therefore made them many sweet temporal promises for their support. Lest they should be weary and faint in their minds, he has engaged to deliver them from all evil: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth them out of them all," Psal. xxxiv. 19. He delivers two ways, either by entirely removing the affliction, or by changing its nature; for he takes the curse out of it, and turns it into a real blessing; he makes it the means of increasing faith and patience, sweetens it with a sense of his presence, and demonstrates that it comes from love, by its increasing love to him in the heart of the righteous. This is the best deliverance, as one of the greatest sufferers for Christ witnesses, who, upon the mention of his afflictions, declares, "Out of them all the Lord delivered me," by saving me from the evil that was in them, and by making them yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

The Lord has also engaged to bestow upon believers all good: "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing," Psal. xxxiv. 10. Their loving Shepherd will see that they lack nothing, no good thing will he withhold from them. To the same purpose are the promises in the New Testament, Matt. vi. 33. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things, food and raiment, and all necessaries, shall be added unto you." I your God and Saviour give you my word for it; trust me, and you shall never want. With confidence did he believe it, who said to the Philippians, iv. 19. "My God shall supply ALL your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." What a powerful motive is here for the strengthening of our faith, that, be our wants ever so many, ever so great, our God has engaged to supply them all! We may boldly, then, cast all our care upon him, since he careth for us, and may rest assured of his managing our whole outward estate infinitely better than we could for ourselves. What trouble, what burdens shall we be hereby eased of! What peace of mind shall we enjoy, when we can give up all our temporal concerns into the Lord's hands, and by faith see them all conducted for our good, by his infinite wisdom and almighty love! Blessed surely is the man who thus putteth his trust in the Lord his God. He is delivered from the anxious care of getting, and from the fear of losing what he has got: he is easy about the present; the future he leaves to the Lord: his conversation is without covetousness, and he is content with such things as he has, and thereby he escapes thousands of the common troubles of life. In this sweet peace he enjoys his soul, because the Lord has said to him, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," in any state, in any want, or in any distress; I will be ever with thee, to turn all things, seem they ever so afflicting, into real blessings. Trusting to this word, which cannot be broken, he may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Let the world persecute me, my trade fail, poverty pinch me, sickness pain me, friends leave me, and all outward comforts forsake me, nevertheless I am a happy man: the Lord Christ is my portion, my all-sufficient portion still; and these things, being of his appointment, are for the best. I find them so; glory be to him! He makes them the means of weaning me from the world, deadening the old man of sin, bringing me to a more intimate acquaintance with himself, and to a greater experience of his

goodness to my soul; whereby he enables me to trust all things for time and for eternity in his hands, who hath said unto me (and faithful is he that hath spoken, who also will do it), "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

But some may say, Are there any persons who live thus above the world, freed from its cares, and fears, and troubles? Yes, thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. He has promised to make all things to work together for good to them that love him, and he has had witnesses, in every age, of his faithfulness, in fulfilling his promises. Read that little book of martyrs, Hebrews xi., and you will see how happy they were in God, not only in prosperity, but also when all the world was against them. Great were the triumphs of their faith. They chose to suffer affliction rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; they esteemed the reproach of Christ, and set more value upon it than upon riches and honours. And we have a great cloud of witnesses in the New Testament, who rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, who blessed their revilers, prayed for their persecutors, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Hear one of them speaking the sentiments of the rest: "I account all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung, that I may win Christ." Still there are some among us of Paul's mind. The Lord hath not left himself without witness. We have a few names, (may the Lord daily add to their number!) who can trust all their temporal affairs in the hands of Christ, and who find the happiness of having them in his management. He does all things well for them: what would make them unhappy, he takes upon himself: "Cast thy burden on the Lord," says he, "and he shall sustain thee;" and he does sustain the weight of it, and thereby frees them from anxious care, and gives them sweet content. They have enough, let them have ever so little of outward things, because they have got the Pearl of great price. Christ is theirs, and the Spirit of Christ enables them to make up all their happiness in him, and not in the things which perish in the using. Christ, with bread and water, is worth ten thousand worlds. Christ, with pain, is better than the highest pleasures of sin. Christ, with all outward sufferings, is matter of present and of eternal joy. Surely these are the only happy people living. Reader, art thou not one of them? Art thou not a partaker of their happiness? If thou art a believer, it is thy privilege; thy title to it is good, and thou enterest into possession by faith; and if it be so weak that thou art not so happy as they are, thou shouldst take shame to thyself for dishonouring God thy Saviour, for robbing him of his glory before men, and for injuring thine own soul, by not committing all thy outward matters unto his guidance. What could he do more, than he has done, to encourage thee to leave them to him, that he might manage them for thee? He has given thee argument upon argument, promises in abundance, bonds which cannot be broken, immutable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie, to convince thee that thou mayest safely trust in him for all temporal things which he knows will be for thy good. Oh! pray then for more faith. Beg of the Lord to enable thee to walk more by faith, and less by sense; that thou mayest commit thy way entirely unto him, and he may direct all thy paths. The more thou trustest in him, the happier he will make thee. Therefore daily entreat him to deliver thee from taking any anxious thought for thy life, what thou shalt eat, or what thou shalt drink; or yet for thy body, what thou shalt put on. Since he knoweth thou hast need of all those things, and hast sent thee to the fowls of the air, and to the grass of the field, to see what a rich provision he makes for them, art thou not much better than they? Oh! pray still for the increase of faith; that all thy worldly matters being resigned, and given up into the hand of the Lord thy God, thou mayest be eased of many weights and burdens, and mayest run with more patience and joy the race that is set before thee.

As these fathers in Christ learn, by daily experience, to live more upon him for the bread that perisheth, so do they for the bread that endureth unto everlasting life. They attain to a fixed, settled dependence upon Christ for the conducting of all things belonging to their state of grace, to their comfortable walk in it, and to their finishing their course happily. They grow in the knowledge

of those blessed truths, are more grounded and better established in them, and these, being received and enjoyed by faith, do manifest the excellency of living by it above any other state, except that of glory.

First, they are pardoned and accepted in the Beloved—in him partakers of every covenant-mercy; for he was made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. His whole salvation is theirs. And this is their state of grace, into which he has brought them, and by faith put them into the present enjoyment of it.

This was largely treated of before, but cannot be too much insisted upon, both because there is a growth in the knowledge of the covenant, and clearer evidence daily to be had of the believer's interest in it, and also because the love and wisdom and mercy in contriving, the power in executing, the grace in applying, the blessings of the covenant, are all infinite. The height and depth, the length and breadth of those divine perfections cannot be fully comprehended. They surpass knowledge; so that if a believer knows a great deal of the way of salvation, yet there is still more, far more to be known. So long as he lives he must be learning, waiting upon the divine Prophet for his inward teaching, and he will become more dependent upon him, the more he learns: for, the wiser he grows, the clearer views will he have of his having attained as yet but little wisdom, which makes him press forward. He believes that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid up in Christ, and he longs for more knowledge of his gracious undertakings, of his adorable person, and of his full and free salvation. He follows on to know the Lord. He advances from one degree to another, from faith to faith, and is not satisfied with any discovery until that which is in part be done away, and he shall know even as also he is known.

The believer, being thus satisfied that he is in a safe state, looks up to the Lord to keep him, and to enable him to walk comfortably in it, which is another excellency of the life of faith. All things are well ordered in the covenant for every step he is to take: all treasured up in the fulness of Christ, and by faith received out of it. The believer has many enemies opposing him in his way heavenwards; but in Christ he has strength sufficient to conquer them all; and does conquer them. His worst enemy, that gives him most uneasiness, is indwelling sin, which is never at rest, like the troubled sea, always casting up some of its filthy motions and corruptions; so that when he is in prayer, it is ever trying to amuse and distract the mind with a thousand vain and idle thoughts, to weaken faith by its carnal reasonings and doubts, or, when he is in any holy duty, it is ever present with him, to hinder him from doing it so perfectly as he would. Over this enemy there is no victory but by faith. The old man of sin defies all strength, except that which is almighty, and therefore this the Lord has promised; and these believers had experience of his faithfulness, whose iniquities he had pardoned, and who declared, Micah vii. 19, "He will subdue our iniquities." He will do it: he is engaged by promise, by office; it is his glory to save his people from the dominion of their sins. On him therefore they depend for continual victory, and according to their faith so it is done unto them. While they fight against sin, relying on the strength of their almighty King, they always conquer: his arm subdues the strongest lust: but if they attack the weakest without him, they are infallibly conquered. And this has so often happened to those fathers that know him, that is from the beginning, that now they never dare go down to battle but with their eyes upon the Lord. He has taught them to depend wholly upon him for the crucifying of the old man of sin day by day; and in the power of his might, armies of lusts are made to flee before them. The captain of their salvation encourages them to fight on, not only by subduing sin in them, but also by making this the earnest of their having in him an absolute mortification of sin. By faith they see it; and his victorious grace will never leave them until he put them into full possession of it. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ their Lord, ere long they shall have perfect and everlasting victory over the whole body and being of sin. And

As the old man is thus crucified, so is the new man quickened by the power of Jesus, received by faith, according to what is written, "The just shall live by his faith." The justified person, by his union with Christ, is a partaker of the grace

of life, and in virtue of this union he lives upon Christ as a member does in the body; and thereby he has communion with the Father, by the bond of the Spirit; and this spiritual life is begun and carried on by faith; it is a life of faith, not as if faith quickened a dead sinner; for Christ is our life; but the sense and comfort, and strength of that life which Christ gives, are received by faith, and these are according as faith is. If faith be weak, so are they; as it grows, so do they; which discovers to us another wonderful excellency of the life of faith, since by it we now partake of a spiritual and eternal life: "For he that believeth hath everlasting life;" hath it now, is already passed from death unto life, and he looks up to the Lord and Giver of it for every thing needful, and expects it out of his fulness. Hear one of these happy believers thus relating his case:—I am dead to the law, says he, yet alive to God; I am crucified with Christ, and am a partaker of the merit and power of his cross, and by faith I have in him an absolute crucifixion of sin; and although the old man is thus crucified, yet the new man liveth: nevertheless I live, yet not I—I live a spiritual life, yet not I as a natural man, I did not quicken myself; I cannot keep myself alive; Christ liveth in me; he is the Author of my life, and on him I depend for the continuance of it in time and in eternity: for the life which I now live in the flesh, while I am in this body of sin and death, I live by the faith of the Son of God: he is the Author, he is the object, of that faith, by which I have received life from him: by an act of sovereign grace he quickened me from a death in trespasses and sins, and united me as a living member into his mystical body, and I am kept alive through his living, acting, and working in me by his Spirit: he dwelleth in my heart by faith; and the more clearly I see this, the more do I love and enjoy the Prince of life, my precious, above all expression, infinitely, eternally precious Jesus, who loved me and gave himself for me, that by his death I might be dead to sin, and by his resurrection might live to and with God for ever and ever. Thanks and praise be to thee without ceasing, thou dear Lamb of God, for thy love to me the chief of sinners! Let all thy people say, Amen.

This is the happy case of those believers who are, like the blessed Paul, strong in the Lord Christ. By his death they are dead to sin; and because he liveth they are alive to God; for they who are joined to the Lord are one spirit: and as their faith increases, they have more spiritual fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, not only in the merit, but also in the efficacy of both. They grow more dependent upon the Lord's strength, and he daily mortifies in them the old man of sin; and as he grows weaker, their other enemies have less power over them. By their lusts Satan tempts them; the more these are mortified, the weaker will be his temptations. By their lusts, by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, the world tempts them; as these are subdued, they will be more crucified to the world. Christ living, dwelling, and reigning in them by faith, will, day by day, weaken the strength of sin and Satan and the world; and by the power of his death and resurrection he will be conforming them more to his own image and likeness: he will by faith enable them to be growing up into him in all things, as long as they live. They will be going on from strength to strength, till sin and death be swallowed up in victory.

Until that happy time come, he has appointed certain means, in the use of which they are to wait for the continual receiving of grace from him to deaden the old man, and for the growth of the new. And this grace they receive, not merely because they use the means, but because they use them in faith, expecting his presence in, and blessing upon them. Believers set the Lord always before them, and look through the means at him: for without him they are good for nothing; but when observed, according to his mind and will, as acts of trust in his promise, and of dependence upon his faithfulness, then they answer the end for which they were instituted, and become the means of spiritual communion with him. And thus legal duties become christian privileges. One of these means is attendance upon public worship; the ground and reason for which is Christ's promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Two or three believers make a church,

when they are gathered together in the name of Christ's divinity. By faith they expect the fulfilling of his promise, and his presence in the midst of them; and they are then most spiritual worshippers, when they are looking most unto Jesus, and enjoying communion with him. What are their prayers but acts of faith and dependence? "Whatever ye shall ask," says Christ, "in my name, believing, ye shall receive." Which words show us that prayer is nothing worth, unless it be presented in Christ's name, and in faith relying on Christ's promise to hear and answer. The object of prayer is the Godhead in three persons. The address to each is in their covenant-offices; and the petitions to each should be according as they stand related to sinners in those offices; and the communion with the divine persons is thus expressed: "Through Christ Jesus we have access by one Spirit unto the Father;" and whatever we ask, believing, we receive. What is believers' hearing the word? Is it not a continual dependence upon their divine Teacher to make his word spirit and life unto their souls? They expect his presence to enable them to mix faith with what they hear, and then they grow thereby. What is their keeping the Lord's day? Is it not to express their belief of his being risen, and entered into his rest, and of their having, by believing, entered into rest also? and therefore they wait upon Christ in the ordinances to keep them until he bring them to his eternal sabbath, to that rest which remaineth for the people of God. What is their attendance upon the Lord's supper? Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ, and the communion of the body of Christ, a real partaking by faith of his broken body, and of his precious blood-shedding, and of all the benefits of his passion? In these and all other ways of God's appointment, they expect Christ's presence, and therefore they go to them with gladness of heart to meet him. He is the dear object of their love, and he grows more lovely by every day's experience. They taste and see more how gracious he is, and therefore to converse with him in prayer, and to be in his company in the ordinances, becomes more sweet and delightful to them. Oh! what happy moments do they therein spend! All the great, rich, and pleasant things in the world are less than nothing compared to this joy. Communion with Christ is heaven begun; and by faith they enjoy it, and nothing can rob them of it but sin; which makes them careful in their life and conversation to please their gracious Lord. They depend upon him to teach them his will, and to give them strength to perform it, that they may walk before him in all well-pleasing. Whatever is opposite to his will they dread, because it would deprive them of their greatest blessing, even communion with their best and bosom Friend. Sin, viewed in this light, is blacker and viler than all the devils in hell. The love of Christ shows sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and faith working by love to Christ gains daily victory over it. He who has the love of Christ in his heart will be thereby sweetly constrained to fight against and powerfully enabled to conquer sin; so that it cannot separate him from his beloved Saviour; nay, it shall make him live in closer and nearer connexion. The motions of sin within, and temptations without, to which he is continually liable, will show him the necessity of living in a settled dependence upon the grace and strength of the Captain of his salvation, who will lead him on conquering and to conquer, until he make him at last more than conqueror.

The same faith, working by love, has gained the hearts and affections of believers over to the interest of holiness; and the commandments now cease to be grievous. Love to Christ, who is perfect righteousness and holiness, cannot consist with the hatred of either; nay, they are renewed after his image in both, and renewed in knowledge, that they might know his precious image, and renewed in heart, that they might love it; therefore, being thus created anew in Christ Jesus, they will certainly, in the inner man, delight in righteousness and true holiness. He has shed his love abroad in their hearts, has won them to himself, and now nothing is dearer to them than that everlasting righteousness by which he justifies them, and that true holiness, of which they are become partakers in him, which they evidence by a holy walk, and in which he will present them holy and unblamable and unrebukable before the Father. Thus he has perfectly secured the interest of holiness, and the glory

of the most holy God; for they are his workmanship, created unto good works, to love them, to do them, to walk in them as the way to the kingdom; and they live by faith upon Christ's strength for will and power to do them, and upon his intercession for the acceptance of them, laying them all upon the golden altar that sanctifieth the gifts. Thus their whole dependence is upon Christ. He is all and in all of their Christian walk. To him they look for every thing needful, to enable them to glorify God in their lives, and to show forth the virtues of him that hath called them; on his grace they rely, that their conversation may be as becometh the gospel of Christ, and that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things; and they find in him a sufficiency of grace, yea they can do all things, and suffer all things, through Christ strengthening them. Whatever difficulties they meet with in the way of duty, leaning upon their Beloved, he carries them through all—Whatever temptations; I will be with thee, says he, in the hour of temptation; look unto me, and thou shalt be saved—Whatever enemies; fear them not, says he, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness—Whatever sorrows; Your sorrows, says he, shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you—Whatever sickness; I will strengthen thee upon the bed of languishing, and I will make all thy bed in thy sickness—Whatever poverty; I will be a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress—Whatever persecution; Blessed are ye, says he, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; I pronounce you, I will make you, blessed. Thus Christ is with them, and none of the evils or miseries of life can separate them from him. He keeps them safe, and carries them through all their trials by his mighty power, and they, trusting in him, find that he m kes all things work together for their good. What a blessed life is this! Surely there is none like it; for the life of faith is glory begun. The privileges, the happiness of it, are greater than can be described. The strongest believers upon earth may daily know more, and may experience far more of the comfort of walking by faith, because, as they grow more established in it, they will be receiving more power over sin, and will walk nearer to God. Having but one object to look unto and to live upon for all things, here they will be quietly settled. What can so effectually keep them from being tossed to and fro, as to have all fulness treasured up for their use in Christ, and to be brought to a fixed dependence upon his fulness, and to live upon it for all things belonging to life and godliness? Hereby sweet peace will be established within, and there will be a regular walk in the outward conversation. The whole man will experience what the Lord has promised to his redeemed people: "I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." He leads them by his Spirit, and causes them to walk by the rivers of waters, where there are abundant streams of grace continually flowing, and he guides them in a straight way, that they shall not stumble or err therein; but shall be kept happily to the end of their course, and shall finish it to their everlasting joy. And

This is another inestimable privilege of believers. Christ has engaged to keep them unto the end; and having begun a good work in them, he has promised never to leave it until it be finished. What a strengthening is this to their faith! and what a glory does it put upon the whole life of faith, that it is a life which cannot perish! Believers have in them the immortal seed of eternal life. This is the crown of all; for how will this bear them up under crosses, support them in troubles, carry them on in their warfare against the flesh, the devil, and the world, and make them defy all dangers, yea death itself, since they are assured, from the mouth of God their Saviour, that none shall pluck them out of his hands. They do not trust themselves, or have any dependence upon grace received, but they rely upon the faithfulness and power of Jesus, who has given them abundant evidence that he will water them with his grace every moment, and hold them up by his strength, and they shall be safe. How confident were believers of this in the Old Testament! One of them, who had attained this assurance of faith, says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;" and he, with many others who had obtained like precious faith with

him, declares, "This is our God for ever; he will be our guide even unto death:" they were sure he would be their God, and would follow them with mercy, and guide them, and do them good in life and death. To the same purpose our Lord has promised believers: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." How confidently did he trust in Christ for the fulfilling of this blessed promise, who said, "I am fully persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Oh! sweet words of comfort! how happy was Paul in this assurance of faith! It is thy privilege, believer, as well as his. Thou hast the same promises that he had, the same God to fulfil them; and thy faith ought to be growing until thou be assured that no creature, not all the powers on earth, nor the gates of hell, can separate thee from Christ. They may as soon get into heaven, and cut off Christ's right hand, which is impossible, as to cut off one of the members of Christ's mystical body.

If thou art ready to say, I see clearly how I should glorify my dear Lord, and how happy I should be if my faith was but like Paul's in this point; but I am so weak and liable to fall, and mine enemies so numerous and mighty, that I sometimes fear I shall never be able to hold out unto the end. Because thou art such, therefore the Lord has given thee his promise that he will hold thee up, and thou shalt be safe. And this promise is part of the covenant which is ordered in all things, and sure. Look at that, and not at thyself. Consider the Messenger of the covenant, in whom it is all ordered, and by whom it is sure. When thy unfaithfulness would discourage thee, think of his faithfulness. Let thy weakness remind thee of his strength. If, indeed, he leave thee a single moment, thou wilt fall; but he has promised, I will *never* leave thee. If the number and strength of thine enemies make thee fear lest thou shouldst one day perish by the hand of Saul, he says to thee, thou shalt be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. But if thou art tempted to doubt, finding thy revolting heart apt to turn from the Lord, "I will put my fear," says he, "into thy heart, that thou shalt not depart from me." Observe, it is his faithfulness and power, and not thine, which is to keep thee, and has covenanted to do it; and he has all power in heaven and earth, and he has given thee promise upon promise for the establishment of thy faith, that thou mightest be certain he will love thee, and keep thee unto the end. And when he has brought thee to a certainty of it, then thy comfort will be full. Christ will be magnified in thee, now he has made thee one of those fathers, who have known him that is from the beginning. He has taught thee so to know him, as to trust him for all things and in all times. This is his crown and glory. He has enthroned himself in thy heart, as thy perfect Saviour; and his kingdom is within thee, even righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Now thy calling and thy election is sure. Thou knowest that he is faithful who has promised to keep thee, who also will do it. And having this assurance of faith, attended with the rejoicing of hope, and being sealed by the blessed Spirit to the day of redemption, surely thou art a happy man, thrice happy, whom the Lord has thus highly favoured. How infinitely indebted art thou to his grace! Oh! what thanks and praises dost thou owe, more than thou canst ever pay, for what he has already done for thee! And yet this is only the dawning of the perfect day. His present favours are only earnests and pledges of what he will hereafter give thee. Therefore still trust in him, and he will enlighten thee more by his Word and Spirit, he will enliven, strengthen, and establish thee more. Thy faith will daily rest more assuredly upon him, the joy of thy hope will increase, thy love will yet more abound. He will guide thee by his counsel in an even course, and will receive thee into glory.

Thus have I treated, as I was able, of the safety and happiness of living by faith upon the Son of God, and have described the common hindrances which stop its growth, and the victory over them, which the Lord gives his people. I have been forced to be very short, and could only throw out some hints upon

this copious subject. May the good Lord pardon what is amiss, and bless abundantly what is according to his mind and will. If thou hast followed me, reader, in thy experience, and art indeed a happy believer, living upon thy blessed Jesus, for his promised heaven; and for all things promised to thee in the way thither, think what a debt thou owest him! how dear and precious should he be to thy heart! He has saved thee from all evil; he will bless thee with all good. As surely as thou hast the earnest, thou shalt have the purchased possession. Oh! what a Saviour is this! he has already bestowed upon thee the exceeding riches of his grace, but how great will be the riches of the glory which he will give thee? Thou wilt soon see him as he is, and then thou shalt be like him. No tongue can tell how great that glory will be, not all the tongues in heaven, after the number of the elect shall be perfected, no not after they have enjoyed it for millions of ages: never, never will they be able to show forth all his praise for making them like himself. Surely then, while thou art waiting for this glory, which shall be revealed, thou wilt be going on from faith to faith, that thy beloved Saviour may become more dear to thee; and that thou mayest have more close and intimate communion with him. Every day's experience should bring thee to love his appearing more. Having tasted how gracious he is, thou shouldst be longing for the marriage supper of the Lamb with fervent desire. And being now a Father in Christ, and strong in faith, thou wilt be often looking up to him, and saying,

Make haste, my beloved, and take me to thyself: let me see thee face to face, and enjoy thee, thou dearest Jesus, whom my soul longeth after. It is good to live upon thee by faith, but to live with thee is best of all. I have found one day in thy courts, conversing sweetly with thee, better than a thousand; but this has only whetted my appetite: the more communion I have with thee, I hunger and thirst still for more. My soul panteth for nearer, still nearer communion with thee. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God? O thou Light of my life, thou Joy of my heart, thou knowest how I wish for the end of my faith, when I shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but with open face behold the glory of my Lord. Thou hast so endeared thyself to me, thou precious Immanuel! by ten thousand thousand kindnesses, that I cannot be entirely satisfied, until I have the full vision and complete enjoyment of thyself. The day of our espousals has been a blessed time. Oh, for the marriage of the Lamb, when I shall be presented as a chaste virgin to my heavenly Bridegroom! How can I but long earnestly for this full enjoyment of thy everlasting love! Come, Lord Jesus; let me see thee as thou art. Come and make me like unto thee. I do love thee; I am now happy in thy love; but not so as I hope to be. I am often interrupted here, and never love thee so much as I desire; but these blessed spirits standing now round thy throne are perfected in love. Oh! that I was once admitted to see, as they do, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Is not that the voice of my Beloved, which I hear answering, *Surely I come quickly!* Amen, say I, even so come, Lord Jesus. Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.

Are not these, believer, the breathings of thy soul? Since the time for them is short, may they grow warmer and more affectionate every day! Thou wilt wait but a little while before thou shalt see the King in his perfect beauty, and thou shalt be a blessed partaker of his eternal glory. And if he make these few lines any means of bringing thee to see more of his beauty at present, to live more upon his fulness, and to be happier in him; I hope thou and I shall, through his grace, meet him soon, and give him to eternity the glory of this and of all his other mercies. To the Lord I commend thee, on whom thou hast believed. May he strengthen and establish thy faith daily, that it may grow exceedingly until he bring thee to the end of it, and admit thee into that innumerable company, who are ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to Him that was slain, and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood: to whom, with the Father, and the eternal Spirit, three Persons in one Jehovah, be equal and everlasting praise. *Amen.*

A TREATISE

UPON

THE WALK OF FAITH.

PREFACE.

Ever since the *Life of Faith* was published, I have been attending to the doctrines therein advanced, and bringing them into experience. Their truth has appeared to me from the word of God, and has been confirmed by their being accompanied with the power of God. His divine influence attends his own doctrines to this day; and they have the promised effect upon the heart and life of the believer. They are mighty through God for all the purposes of salvation. What is said upon the subject in these volumes is chiefly in this experimental way. My design is to bring the great and leading points of our religion into use and practice, and to show how necessary the doctrines of grace are for the well governing of the Christian walk. Every thing needful is promised, and by faith is received, which can make it even and regular, holy and happy.

The apostle Paul complained of professors who walked not according to the gospel. There has been occasion for the same complaint ever since; but never more than at present. Many walk at this day, who make some profession of Christ, and yet never attain to any steadfastness, but are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and at last come to nothing.

Others, pretending to be better settled, attain to some form of godliness, but are without the life and power of it: they appear to have some notions and opinions about the way of righteousness, but not being taught them of God, nor ever brought under the mighty influence of them, their walk is therefore very uneven and irregular, and generally in the end brings great scandal upon the name and cause of Christ.

We have also many at this day, who set out in the ways of religion, but never felt the ruin of the fall, nor the plague of their own hearts: these are commonly very confident and presumptuous; they make a shining profession, and go on with great parade, until they come to be tried, and then in the time of temptation they fall away.

There are others who are the real children of God, and yet do not walk as becometh their high rank and dignity. An even, holy, happy walk with their reconciled God and Father is their privilege, and there is grace sufficient promised in Jesus, and to be received by his Spirit, to enable them to live up to it, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Yea, the apostles call upon them and encourage them to be going on and advancing in the right way —"Furthermore then we beseech you and exhort you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more," 1 Thess. iv. 1. How few follow this evangelical exhortation! How very few attain and preserve in their consciences the sense of God's being perfectly at peace with them! It ought to rule there always and by all means: but for want of it, they afford continual occasion for a legal and unbelieving spirit to rob them of their peace, and thereby to distress them in their hearts. As guilt comes in, love goes out. What weakens the cause must also weaken the effect. Love, with its fruits, must decrease in proportion as the believer withdraws his heart-dependence from God. Then he begins to walk uneven and uncomfortable; he grows cold and indifferent about spiritual things; he gets into darkness and discontent; he becomes quite un-

happy in his frame, and unthankful in his affections: whatever was the cause of his falling into this decay, it began at the root. His faith was attacked, and gave way. As this yielded, the decay became general; and it was found true, "If ye will walk contrary unto me," saith God, "then will I also walk contrary unto you."

Reader, if thou hast the faith of God's elect, thou knowest that these things are true. Thou findest it hard work to maintain peace with God: and if this be not maintained, if the foundation give way, the building will certainly totter. Look well then to the ground-work. Is all safe there? Dost thou see the infinite glory of the Saviour's work, when he made peace by the blood of the cross? and does this silence guilt in thy conscience? Canst thou at all times draw nigh in love to a reconciled God? Does not the sense of thy failings and remaining corruptions keep thee at a distance from him, and render thy walk uncomfortable, especially when without are fightings, within are fears? If it be very difficult under such trials to preserve a sense of God's loving kindness, yet it should be remembered, there is a gracious provision made for the establishing of the soul so safely in Jesus Christ, that the peace of God may rule in it always, and by all means. Is it not necessary then to inquire what this provision is? how it may be received? and how it may be made use of? for if by daily practice it may be experienced in its divine power, it will then have the same happy effect which it had upon David: "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast set my heart at liberty." May thine heart, reader, and mine, enjoy more of the liberty of the children of God! and then ye shall not only go forward, but also run fast; and may nothing stop us from pressing towards the mark, till we win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This has been my constant prayer during the writing of the following treatise. Itwas the fruit of reading, and meditating, and praying over those scriptures, which speak of the walk of faith. Such reflections as used to occur to myself, I have put down; whether it was in searching my own heart, or in begging the blessing of God upon the text then under consideration. This seemed to me an easy method, and very useful; because the doctrine would lead to practice; and frequent and heart-searching meditations would tend, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to an increase of faith. There are some soliloquies, addressed to my own soul, and some exercises of devotion, in prayer and thanksgiving. I would have every believer to consider whether it be not his privilege to join me in them, and to make my words his own. If he cannot follow me in this experience after the 5th chapter, I pray God to increase his faith, that this book and his experience may go hand in hand; and that he may attain to holy fellowship with God in all duties, and to rejoice in God at all times, yea, under the cross itself, and to go on conquering and to conquer, till the good fight of faith be over, and he finish his course with joy.

THE WALK OF FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

Whoever walks with God, must be first acquainted with the way of peace.

It is the constant usage of scripture to represent spiritual things by material, and to speak of the faculties and actions of the soul by terms borrowed from those of the body. Walking is a bodily action, and consists in moving and going from one place to another; hence it is applied to the spiritual walk. The soul, reconciled to God and at peace with him, has an appointed way, in which it is to walk, in order to enjoy the grace promised to them who are in Christ Jesus. This is enjoyed by faith; and therefore the scripture calls the believer's going on in his walk with God from strength to strength, *The walk of faith.* "We walk by faith," says the apostle, "not by sight."

When man fell from God, he lost his way, and had neither will nor power to

return. The Old Testament church makes this confession—"All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned EVERY ONE to his own way." Isa. liii. 6.

The apostle Peter reminds believers of this—"Ye are as sheep going astray; but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls," 1 Pet. ii. 25. To which agree the words of his brother Paul: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: they are ALL gone out of the way," Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12. The whole human race, says the oracles of truth, is gone astray, ALL of them are gone out of the way; they have left the way of God, and turned every one to his own way, they are unable, like a poor lost sheep, the most unable of all creatures, to return; yea, they are unwilling also; for they walk not after the spirit, but after the flesh—carnally minded, and in their carnal mind enmity itself against God and his ways.

It pleased God, in the exceeding riches of his grace, to reveal to those wanderers the way of salvation. He made it known to them upon the fall, and believers from that time forward saw it plainly, and went on in it comfortably. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. are said to have walked with God in the very same way, afterwards marked out by the written word: which was a directory to the Jews, showing them how they should walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham. Age after age, God raised up the prophets to bring his people into the King's highway, and to put them upon praying, that they might be kept in it. By the mouth of his servant David, he gave them this promise: "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way—the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Encouraged by this warrant from the word of God, sinners feeling their wants were led to pray, "Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths: lead me in thy truth and teach me," Psalm xxv. 4. It is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God; they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. If any of his children lack wisdom, and ask it of God, he giveth to all his liberally, and upbraideth not. He brings them by his word and by his Holy Spirit to the knowledge of themselves and to the knowledge of the true God.

Divine teaching is necessary to make men acquainted with themselves. They know not their state, nor fear their danger, until the Holy Spirit, according to his office, proceed from the Father and the Son: then he convinces them of sin, of the exceeding sinfulness of it, of the guilt thereby incurred, and of the wrath deserved. He enlightens the understanding with a clear sight of those truths, and he fastens the conviction of them upon the conscience. Then they find that they had been blind and ignorant, rebels in their wills, and apostates in their hearts from God. He makes them feel the corruption of their nature, and the error of their ways, in which, if they had gone on, they must inevitably have perished; for they were without will, and without power, to return to God. When they were made to see it right that they ought to return, and to repent, yet it was not their choice to come to him in the way of believing. They found they could not believe, unless it was given them from above. Faith is the gift of God; and cannot be received, but by the mighty operation of God. He must put forth his divine power, or else the convinced sinner will remain utterly helpless and hopeless, shut up in unbelief.

Thus the Lord teaches all his children. He makes them acquainted with their fallen state, and sensible of their guilt and of their misery. He brings them to the right knowledge of the corruption of every faculty of soul and body, which are always inclining to evil, and incapable of doing any thing truly good. A corrupt tree can bring forth nothing but evil fruit. The judgment is enlightened to see this, the conscience is awakened to feel this, and thereby the convinced sinner is made willing to be taught the way of salvation. The Holy Spirit fulfils his office by teaching him the knowledge of God.

Our blessed Saviour declares, no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; and this he does by the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who

is therefore given to the children of God, that they may know him and believe in him, as their reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. This saving knowledge is hid from the worldly wise and prudent, but is revealed unto the unlearned, whom the Holy Spirit has made simple and teachable people. To them he reveals the things of God. He makes them acquainted with the

Nature of the Godhead, which is one. There is one Jehovah, and there is none other. And also with the

Personality in the Godhead, Father, Son and Spirit. These three exist in the one Jehovah. They took those names, not to describe their manner of existing, but their manner of acting; not what they are in themselves, but how they stand related to us in the economy of redemption: for the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and agreed to sustain certain covenant-offices, and assume names, or characters, descriptive of their offices. Father is the title of that divine person, who, out of his infinite grace, gave an innumerable company of sinners to his Son, upon condition that he would be manifested in the flesh, and would become their surety, to work out for them a righteousness in his life, and to make an atonement for them by his death, and then he would be his father and their father. A coequal and coeternal Person accepted the condition, and covenanted to be made man, and to live and die for the many sons whom he was to bring to glory; therefore he took the name of Son, Son of God, Son of Man, &c. Another coequal and coeternal Person covenanted to breathe life into them, to be to them the Spirit, or breath of life, that they might be regenerate from a death in trespasses and sins, and be made the children of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ: therefore he is called throughout the scriptures *the Spirit*, or the breath of life. He makes them acquainted with the covenant as he has promised. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant," Psalm xxv. 14. He will open to them the nature and uncertainty of all covenant engagements for the establishment and growth of their faith. *The covenant was ordered in all things, and sure;* it was ORDERED by the counsel and purpose of the eternal Three concerning the heirs of promise, whose salvation was settled by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie—his counsel, his oath. His counsel the result of his infinite wisdom, confirmed by that sacred oath which cannot possibly be broken. All his perfections stand engaged to see the sovereign decree, thus solemnly ratified, carried into execution; for what was *ordered* is SURE—sure as the throne of Jehovah, unchangeable as his nature, durable as his being. Though it be but a man's covenant, yet, when it has been signed and sealed according to law, none disannulleth or addeth thereto. None can disannul God's covenant, and he himself will not: "My covenant will I not break," says he, "nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips," Psalm lxxxix. 34. I will not add thereto, nor diminish from it; for I have ordered it in ALL things. I have not left one single thing out, not the least circumstance: I have settled the whole plan by mine unerring wisdom; and I will fulfil every tittle of it by mine almighty power. According to my will the course of nature and grace is infallibly directed, even the most minute events. Every hair is numbered. Not a sparrow falls but by my divine decree.

How safely, then, may the heirs of promise depend upon a covenant God! and whenever they flee to Jesus for refuge, what strong consolation may they draw from hence, that their salvation is fixed by the immutable counsel and inviolable oath of the blessed Trinity!

The same divine teacher, who enabled them to believe those truths for the further establishment of their faith, led them to discover the FREENESS of all covenant mercies. They are promised as free gifts. They are bestowed to the praise of the glory of free grace. They are not conferred upon the worthy, but upon enemies, upon the ungodly, upon sinners as sinners. No conditions are required, no pre-requisites are expected. The motives which determine God to show mercy to sinners are not taken from any good in them, or foreseen to be in them. Not for works of righteousness which they have done, or can do; but according to his mercy he saveth them. He does all to the magnifying of the honours of his own mercy. His covenant was so contrived, carried into execu-

tion by the life and death of Jesus, applied by the Holy Spirit, that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. No flesh shall glory in his presence. Boasting is for ever excluded; because all is of grace. Wisdom to teach the sinner saving knowledge, righteousness to justify him, strength to keep him, comforts to bless him, heaven to receive him, these are the free gifts of covenant love; for by grace is he saved through faith, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. Thus would the Lord hide pride from man, and would teach him practically such scriptures as this—"Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord, be it known unto you; but for mine holy name's sake," Ezek. xxxvi. 32.

Closely connected with this divine lesson is the FULNESS of covenant mercies. Every thing needful for the salvation of the sinner is fully, as well as freely, provided by the exceeding riches of grace, and is treasured up by the Father's love in the fulness of the Son. To this the Spirit bears witness in the word of truth, and seals his witness upon the believer's heart. It pleased the Father that in the Word made flesh should ALL fulness dwell, and that out of his fulness his people should receive grace for grace. This is the infinite ocean. There is not a stream, not a drop of grace, to be had, but from hence. Jesus Christ, as God-man, has it all in himself, and for the same end, as the head has the senses in itself. He has it to communicate to his members, a fulness of light and life, of sense and understanding, of love and joy, yea of every spiritual blessing. On him, as the head of the body, the church, every believing member is directed to live. On him must he depend at all times; and to him must he go for all things. If he seek pardon and peace, righteousness and holiness, a supply of his wants, strength for his warfare, comforts under his miseries; if he expect life in death, and life eternal; he must make continual use of the fulness of Jesus, for in him dwelleth ALL the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It dwelleth in him, as in an overflowing fountain. The Father's love to his adopted children, the experience of it by the grace of the Spirit, are entirely in and from the salvation of Jesus Christ. Out of his fulness comes every covenant mercy of the Godhead, and in a rich abundant stream, always flowing with some blessing or other into the believer's soul. The enjoyment of it on his part may not be always alike comfortable; but it is always alike sure on God's part. Nothing can stop it. Nothing can turn its course. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. The river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and it will be running on till it come back into its own ocean. The water that I will give him, says Jesus, speaking of the believer, shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and bringing with it the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

No man will see any reason to set out in the way to heaven until he be made acquainted with those truths. His judgment must be enlightened with the knowledge of them. He will never think of changing his course until he be made sensible of his own sinful and helpless state; and when this is brought home to his conscience, and he has nothing in himself left to trust in, then he will be led to look abroad for help. The Spirit of God will teach him the doctrines of grace, the nature of the Godhead, the persons in the Godhead, the covenant of the divine persons, by which every grace and blessing was freely and fully provided, given by the Father to the Son, in whose fulness they were all laid up for the use of his body the church, and communicated to every member of it through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus he is taught that all is of grace, from first to last. Whatever good a sinner receives on earth, or enjoys in heaven, is so given as to exclude all boasting, and to lay every proud and self-righteous principle in the dust, that grace alone may wear the crown and have all the glory.

Here, then, O my soul, is matter of close examination. Dost thou know thyself, thy state and condition? and hast thou fled from the wrath to come? Has the light of God's word shone into thine understanding, and made thee to see that thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven? How was this discovered to thee? Did the Holy Spirit ever convince thee of sin, and that thou hast lost the image and forfeited the favour of God? Didst thou ever see thyself fallen in Adam, in

him a child of wrath, a ruined miserable sinner? Hast thou felt how utterly unable thou art to atone for thy sins, or to make thyself holy? And wast thou brought to this after many legal trials and self-righteous efforts? At last forced to give up all hope in thyself, and to look to the Lord who made heaven and earth, from whom alone thy help could come?

And hast thou been taught the true knowledge of the unity of the Godhead, and of the persons in it, Father, Son, and Spirit; the covenant of the ever-blessed Three, and the absolute security of all covenant mercies, promised by the Father, and engaged to be given to the Son as the head of his body, the church, who is now actually as God-man in possession of them, and by his Spirit he freely and fully bestows them upon his members? for they will never cease to be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, until they receive out of the same fulness glory for glory.

O my soul! examine closely and prove thyself, by the standard of the divine word. Search and try what the conviction of thy lost estate has been. Was it deep and practical? Is it an abiding truth with thee, that there is no help or hope in thyself? And hast thou fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before thee in the Lord Jesus? Is thy knowledge of the Godhead mere theory, or is it brought into practice? Dost thou enjoy the Father's love, through faith in the finished salvation of the Son, by the influence of the Holy Spirit? This is the saving knowledge of the Godhead. And is this thine? Dost thou honour the Divine Persons by acknowledging their immutable counsel, and immutable oath, entered into for the security of the heirs of promise, that they might trust, and not be afraid? Dost thou see with any clearness the absolute safety of relying upon the promises of God? and dost thou expect to draw from hence comfort to thy conscience, and joy to thy heart?

If thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven, art thou settled in the knowledge of thy fallen state? Hast thou found thyself unable to do anything, but to hasten on thy ruin? And, from the sight and sense of this, hast thou been led to see all undertaken for thee, and secured to thee for time and eternity, in the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity. These truths lie at the very foundation of all comfortable walking with God. See that thou be well grounded in them. The knowledge of thyself is to bring thee to God: the knowledge of God is to lead thee to walk with him. The one is to teach thee to renounce all trust in thyself; the other is to show thee that thou mayst safely place the confidence of thy heart on thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy guide. Look up to him, then! O my soul, and be often praying to him, and saying,

O Lord God! that which I see not, teach thou me. Keep me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. Let me be daily learning there what I am in myself, a fallen, sinful creature, justly deserving everlasting destruction from thy presence. Oh, let me never lose sight of my want of a Saviour, nor ever be without the sense of what is said—"Without me ye can do nothing." Teach me this, thou eternal Spirit. Open thou mine understanding to understand the Scriptures. What thou hast revealed in them concerning the Godhead, and concerning the counsels and works of the ever-blessed Trinity, that reveal to my soul. Thou hast declared that no man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost; Oh shine, then, into my dark mind, and lead me into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Make me acquainted with his covenants undertaken, and his perfect fulfilling of them, that, by resting on his finished salvation, I may find the Father's love in the Son, his Father, my Father, and may be brought, through thy blessed influence, to have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Oh, lead me into all truth, thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation! that I may know the things which belong to my peace, and may through thee be made wise unto salvation. *Amen.*

CHAPTER II.

The believer is reconciled to God, and has the peace of God ruling in his conscience; and they two walk together, because they are now agreed.

It is written in the prophets—"They shall be all taught of God." Every one of his children shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and what they have been taught in the understanding shall be made practical, that it may have its proper effect upon the conscience. And this is answered, when it comes under the authority and power of the word of God, and faithfully accuses or condemns according to that unerring rule.

Conscience supposes the knowledge of some rule, and it consists in comparing a man's state or actions with that rule, in order to discover whether they agree with it, or not.

The rule is the scripture, the whole revealed will of God, which is the unerring, and the only standard of right and wrong; for all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, to teach the man of God what is truth, and to make him wise in it unto salvation. Fallen man has no means of discovering the will of God, but as it is revealed to him. He has no innate knowledge. He has no implanted principles. He is born as ignorant of God, and of the things of God, as a wild ass's colt. His understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart. And he has no means in his own power of attaining any divine knowledge; for he cannot by searching find out God. The world, by its wisdom, never did find him out. The Hottentots know as much of him as the Greeks and Romans did: indeed, the natural man, let him be ever so wise, knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.

The scripture, then, is the only rule of right and wrong. Conscience has no direction but this rule. Neither ethics nor metaphysics, no fancied light of dark nature, no lawless law of rebel nature, no human science, whether pretended to be implanted, or by the use of reason to be acquired, have any right to guide the conscience. These are blind leaders of the blind. They undertake that for which they are not only unfit, but that which they have no warrant for. A parcel of felons in jail may think what they will of their state. They may take it upon them to form a mock court, to try one another. They may acquit or condemn, as they please; but the judge and the jury will pay no regard to their foolish proceedings. There is a word which is to try us at the last day, and by that we should try ourselves at present. It was revealed for this purpose. And when the revealed truth is clearly understood, then conscience is acting aright if it finds a true verdict for God, either accusing, or else excusing, according to the direction of his unerring word.

And this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He enlightened the judgment with the knowledge of the truth, in order to make it practical; which he effects by bringing the conscience to submit to the sovereignty of God in the law, and to submit to the righteousness of God in the gospel. Herein he displays the omnipotent power of his grace, according to the promise, John xvi. 8. He carries with demonstration the conviction of guilt, and the conviction of righteousness, to the conscience. By the former he gives the sinner a real heartfelt sense of his sin and misery, and he acknowledges himself a convict of the law, justly deserving all its penalties in time and in eternity. By the latter he sets open a door of hope, showing him the perfect righteousness of the God-man wrought out for such guilty creatures as he is: he enables him to plead it before the throne, and to trust in it for his acceptance: by which means he finds relief in his conscience, and comfort in his heart. Being justified by faith, he has peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What the Holy Spirit teaches has life, as well as light, in it. He accompanies his doctrine with the power of God. What he has revealed concerning the state

of mankind under the fall, he applies with divine evidence to the conscience. Under his influence the sinner reads those scriptures, and feels the truth of them. "As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so that death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: through the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; for it is written, there is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it commands them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped; and all the world may become guilty before God." His mouth is stopped. He has no plea to make; no excuse left. What the law saith he subscribes to. The law brings him in guilty before God, and in his conscience he bears his testimony to the law. He acknowledges it to be holy, just and good, even in its penalties, which he deserves to suffer. Formerly he tried, in his own strength, and took great pains to escape them, but now he gives over all those self-righteous attempts. He found that he laboured in vain to atone for his sins, or to make himself holy. He groans, being burdened under the ruins of the fall. His ignorance, rebellion, apostasy, his corruption in every faculty of soul and body, render him unable to take one step in his return to God. He owns it, and confesses that without Christ he can do nothing.

Oh, my soul! consider whether God has taught thee this knowledge of thyself. It is absolutely necessary to reconcile thee to him and to his ways. Thou wilt never heartily agree to walk with him by faith, so long as thou hast any thing of thine own to trust in, or to draw comfort from. Examine, then; art thou sensible of thy fall, and dost thou feel the sad effects of it? Dost thou know what it is to be alienated from the life of God? What! dost thou find to this day the opposition of thy sinful nature to the holy law, the flesh lusting in thee against the spirit? Has God thus convinced thee of sin? If he has, then in thy conscience thou submittest to what the law says of thy state. Thy mouth is stopped, and thou art guilty before God. Thou hast nothing of thine own to urge in arrest of judgment. This is an enlightened conscience; so far it speaks for God, and is guided by his unerring word. Oh, pray to the Lord the Spirit, and beg of him to guide thee into all truth, that he may bring thy conscience to submit to the righteousness of Jesus, and to be a faithful witness for him.

This is his proper work in the soul, and what he undertook in the everlasting covenant. When he is come, says Christ, he shall convince the world of righteousness: he shall testify of me, that I am made of God righteousness to believers; and he shall glorify me as Jehovah their righteousness: thus he shall teach them my righteousness, with which the Father is satisfied; and he shall through faith apply it effectually to their consciences, and they shall also be satisfied with it. Being justified by faith, they shall have peace with God through their Lord Jesus Christ.

Righteousness is a perfect conformity to the law: if it be tried by the balance of the sanctuary, it is full weight; if by the standard, it is full measure; if judgment be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, it is quite upright. There is no defect in it of any kind. This is the righteousness of the law—it must be perfect and continual, failing in no one point: for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And it is an adjudged case that there is none righteous, no not one. It is left upon record that ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

When the Holy Spirit has convinced a sinner of his being in this unrighteous state, then it becomes an important inquiry—how can the Judge of all the earth ever look upon and treat a sinner, as if he were a righteous person? To which the gospel answers directly—"God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God IN him." This was agreed upon in the covenant of the eternal Three. The Father undertook to maintain the honour and dignity of his law and justice. His coequal Son undertook for his people to come in their nature, and to stand in their place and

stead; to act for them, and to suffer for them. As their surety, he made himself answerable for their debt of obedience, and for their debt of suffering. Accordingly, when the great law-fulfiller cometh into the world he saith, Lo, I COME TO DO THY WILL, O GOD. He did it in his infinitely holy life, in which he magnified the precepts of the law, and made them everlastingly honourable. He suffered it in his infinitely holy passion, bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, their curse and wrath in his body and soul, upon the tree, until the immense debt being paid, he cried out in the triumph of a conquering, though a dying Jesus, IT IS FINISHED: for through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: he finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

This is the great leading truth of the gospel in which the peace of conscience is principally concerned. The justly offended God is here revealed under the character of a reconciled Father. He gave his Son to be a covenant of the people, who was to fulfil all covenant engagements for them; and he has fulfilled them all. The end of his living and dying for them is answered. He has finished the transgression, and has made peace by the blood of his cross. He has brought in everlasting righteousness by his divine obedience, and the Lord is well pleased with *him* for his righteousness' sake, yea he is well pleased also with his body, the church. He looks upon all the members, as he looks upon the head. He accepts them in the beloved. He beholds them in him with perfect delight, and rests in his love. He is his Father, and their Father. He is related to his whole family in heaven and earth in the closest bonds of fatherly affection, and he makes his love known to them, and sheds it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. He would have all his children to address him under his dear name, "OUR FATHER *which art in heaven*," and to expect from his fatherly love all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

When this comfortable doctrine is received into the conscience, it silences guilt, and produces peace with God. The gospel comes with full authority to establish it in the conscience; for it is therein revealed and proposed to our belief under the character of a divine RECORD, made authentic and properly enrolled in the court of heaven. The witnesses are the eternal Three. Their record is in the nature of a covenant, confirmed by their joint counsel, and ratified by their joint oath—the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. He graciously vouchsafed to give the heirs of promise this perfect security for their salvation, that after they had fled to Jesus for refuge, there might be an end of all strife in their consciences, and they might have strong consolation. Accordingly we read, "There are Three that bear record in heaven —the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost—and these Three are ONE." A record among men is an authentic testimony in writing, entered by authority in one of the king's courts, in order to preserve the proceedings had upon any suit. This record contains the final determination of the judges in that cause, and in their memorial of it, and therefore imports in itself such uncontrollable evidence, as to admit of no proof to the contrary. The matter of the record is never allowed to be tried by a jury, but is of such credit as not to be questioned in any instance. This is the nature of a record in law. And, if we receive the witness of men, certainly the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath witnessed of his Son; namely, "He hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." To which the Spirit beareth witness; because the Spirit is truth. He has revealed the covenant of life and peace, which was between the Father and the Son; he has entered it upon record, and every word of the record may be pleaded, for it is allowed to be good and valid in the court of heaven. As a powerful advocate, he pleads the perfect fulfilling of all righteousness in the life and death of the God-man, and the Father's perfect acceptance of what he did and suffered, as the full redemption-price for all his people, and he carries his cause in the court of conscience. The awakened sinner is convinced that the work of Jesus is a finished salvation, and that the divine record is a sufficient warrant for him to believe in it. Accordingly, he gives it credit, and is enabled to plead it against guilt and fear; upon which he finds peace with God.

Trusting to the blood of sprinkling for pardon, and to the righteousness of Jesus for acceptance, he then sees God reconciled to him, and that reconciles him to God, and by the spirit of adoption he cries Abba, Father.

But perhaps it may be said, I believe this, but I do not find peace in my conscience. Nay, but you do not believe it; if you did, it would certainly bring present relief: for guilt comes from the broken law, and from the apprehension of punishment deserved; but the law has been restored to its dignity, and made infinitely honourable by the righteousness of Jesus: how can you believe this, and yet be under guilt? The punishment was laid upon Jesus, and he suffered all that was due to his people, as their atoning sacrifice: how can you believe this, and yet fear that justice will punish you? A debtor would not fear to be arrested, if his surety had paid the sum, and got him a full discharge. A felon with the king's pardon in his pocket would dishonour it greatly, if he were to live in continual dread and terror of suffering for his crime. Examine carefully, and pray for the right understanding of your case, and, depend upon it, you will find that either you do not believe the matter of fact, or the record concerning it.

The matter of fact is the method provided for quieting the guilty conscience—a provision of exceeding rich grace and of everlasting efficacy. The Father gave the Son to be the surety for his people, and to live and to die for them, and in their stead. The Son has finished the work which the Father gave him to do, and is become the author of their eternal salvation.

The record of this fact is in the scripture. Father, Son, and Spirit, the three witnesses in heaven, have by covenant and oath attested that there is life for every one who believeth in Jesus. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that, whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now consider; of what do you doubt? Has Jesus made full atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness? Has the Father demonstrated again and again his perfect delight in his person, and his infinite satisfaction in his work. Certainly you cannot question this doctrine, if you believe the scripture to be a divine revelation. Do you doubt, then, of God's free promise, or of his faithfulness to fulfil it? What! Can his word be broken? Can his promise fail? His word and promise, ratified in the immutable covenant, and sealed with the immutable oath of the eternal Three? This is your warrant to believe. And do you question the veracity of it? "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar." Oh, what a dreadful sin to give the lie to the Holy Trinity! The Father says, whosoever cometh, the Son says all that come unto me, shall be saved; the Spirit says, come whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, and be saved. Are not these faithful sayings worthy of all credit, especially as they are delivered with divine authority under the great seal of heaven? If doubts still remain, pray against them, and meditate upon the unreasonableness as well as the wickedness of them, and continue to hear and to read the word (for faith cometh, and groweth too, by hearing) that you may be enabled to put honour upon it by venturing your soul upon the divine faithfulness to make it good to you.

Perhaps you may believe the record which God hath given of his Son, but you cannot do it with steadfastness. You can at times stay your mind upon God with sweet peace, but you are not able to maintain it; yea, you lose it when you want it most. How in this case shall the believer keep the peace of God ruling always in his conscience?

It is to be maintained in the same way by which it was first received. It came by believing, and is thereby strengthened. By the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, peace was made between God and man; by the sprinkling of his blood, peace is made between man and God. When this is applied to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, and received by faith, there is a continual preservative against guilt: "For the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Here is the witness of God; and it is always the same. This believed, will always bring the same cleansing virtue, and keep the conscience purged from dead works. If at any time guilt defile it, then unbelief has entered, and has been denying,

either that the blood of Christ does cleanse from all sin, or that the divine testimony concerning it does deserve credit. Guilt cannot easily enter into the conscience but by one of these two ways. Examine, and see which it is. Do you doubt of the virtue of Christ's blood, or of the truth of God's record concerning it?

You reply, I dare not question either of them, yet nevertheless I cannot with any settled comfort maintain peace with God. But it is your privilege to maintain it, confirmed to you by the royal charter of grace, and ratified in it by many express promises. Jesus has made peace by the blood of his cross; and if you believe what the God of truth says of it, peace should rule in your heart always: for all things are well ordered for you and sure, in the everlasting covenant. On the part of God, all is unalterably fixed and settled. What is it, then, which unsettles you? Is it something you find in yourself? Is it from indwelling sin, remaining corruption, a body of sin and death, or from the weakness of your faith and of your other graces? What! have you forgotten that from all these the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth? Is it from a suspicion that your peace is not right, because it ebbs and flows? This should humble, but not discourage you; because there is a gracious provision made to remove your suspicion. God has taken the charge both of you and of your peace: he keeps both by his mighty power; as it is written, The peace of God which surpasses all understanding shall keep with a safeguard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. You are as safe in the hand of God, at the lowest ebb, as at the highest spring-tide of sensible comfort; because your safeguard is almighty, and he is equally concerned about your peace, whether you feel it or not. Your sense of it may vary, but he varies not. There is in him no variableness, nor shadow of turning. How should the belief of this stay your mind upon your God, and keep guilt out of the conscience, even when you are walking in darkness, and have no light!

O my soul! meditate upon those precious truths. Give thyself wholly to them. Consider how deeply they enter into the very being of thy peace. Unless they be understood, thou canst not know the way of peace; and unless they be received by faith, thy conscience will not be purged from guilt and unbelief. And while these defile it, thou canst not look upon God as reconciled, or delight thyself in him or in his ways. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? But when they are agreed, and of one mind, then walking with God becomes pleasant, and all his paths are peace.

Search, then, and examine thyself, O my soul! and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but closely and thoroughly by the light of the divine word, and under the teaching of the divine Spirit. Dost thou understand what is revealed concerning the way of peace—what was covenanted in the counsel of the eternal Three—and what has been done in consequence of it? Jesus Christ is the great peacemaker. He has made peace through the blood of his cross. The Father sent him, gave him to be a covenant of the people, to fulfil for them all righteousness, and to be their atoning sacrifice. The Father has seen the work which he gave him to do, and has accepted it; is perfectly satisfied with it, and therefore is infinitely delighted with him and with all his. He would now be known by the high style and title of the God of Peace. Fury is not in him to those whom he sees in the beloved. He is a Father, fully, for ever reconciled to all his children in Christ Jesus. He loves them, as he loves him, with every kind feeling of the most tender parent. And he will bring every one of them to partake with their glorified head of the blessings of his everlasting love.

If thine understanding be enlightened with this knowledge of God, is it effectual in thy conscience? Canst thou plead it there? This is the principal thing. Hast thou a good conscience, freed from guilt and condemnation, by believing the record which God hath given of his Son? He is well pleased with him for his righteousness' sake. His soul delighted in the sweet-smelling savour of his Son's sacrifice. Because he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore the Father hath highly exalted him. This is the witness of God. Dost thou yield to it, and give it full credit? What canst thou set to thy seal that God is true, and that what satisfied him has perfectly satisfied thee, and therefore the peace of God rules in thy conscience always and by all means?

Remember, this is thy privilege. Thou art called to the enjoyment of it. The evidence is as full as could be desired, for the ending of all strife in thy conscience. The greatest honour thou canst put upon the divine witnesses, is so to end it as to suffer no appeal to be made from their decree. Thy conscience should join issue. It should say the same that God does. It should plead thy discharge from guilt under the broad seal of heaven; and should stop the mouth of unbelief with those words written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace—"There is NO condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—they are freely forgiven ALL trespasses"——"They are justified from ALL things."—"Thy sins and iniquities," says God himself, "will I remember NO MORE." These are the immutable words of truth. They cannot be broken. O my soul! put honour upon them. Believe them without doubt or wavering. Why dost thou draw back thy confidence? Trust, and be not afraid. Thou mayst safely venture to believe all that the Lord hath spoken. He will make it good; and the more thou believest, the more will be made good. More faith will bring thee in a richer revenue of peace. The Lord increase thy faith. May it entirely influence thy conscience, that it may agree with God, neither questioning the infinite value of the righteousness and atonement of Immanuel, nor yet the faithfulness of his promise, under which thou claimest them—"WHOSOEVER WILL, may take them freely."

Let thy faith be ever so well established, yet thou wilt meet with something every day, to try it; but remember, the foundation on which thou standest cannot fail, and none, nothing, shall remove thee from it. The Lord brought thee to build upon this foundation. He hath begun the good work, and he will not leave his work unfinished. The top-stone shall certainly be brought forth with shouting GRACE—GRACE: for his love is like himself. His purposes, his word, his works change not. What if thou feel many things wrong in thyself; thou art sometimes low in spirits; thou canst not be pleased with thy corruption, and thou art not pleased with thy duties; thy graces are weak; thy love not as it should be; thy best services unprofitable; yet those very things, rightly understood and improved by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be the means of establishing thy conscience in the peace of God: they will lead thee every day to a greater dependence upon sovereign grace: for they will leave thee nothing to trust in but the righteousness and the atonement of Immanuel; nothing to keep thee, but his faithfulness to his word and work; and nothing to bless thee but his free covenant mercy. Thus they will work together for thy good: trials will settle thee: enemies will confirm thee in peace: troubles will bring thee nearer to God. Amidst all discouragements thou wilt have this promise to stay thy soul upon: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." His friendship is fixed: it springs from the purpose and love of his own breast, and therefore was and is always unchangeably the same in him. Whom he loveth, he loveth unto the end.

Well then, O my soul! thou hast examined thyself. How is it with thee? Dost thou know the way of peace? Art thou at peace with God, being justified by faith? Canst thou plead this peace, and maintain it in thy conscience? Is it a good conscience? does it witness for God? Is it a pure conscience, cleansed from guilt and condemnation? Is it satisfied that the Father is perfectly reconciled through the life and death of his Son? and is it satisfied with the divine record giving thee a free grant of the benefits of his life and death, and putting thee into possession by believing? Art thou of one heart and of one mind in this matter with the Father, and now, being at peace with him, agreed to walk in his way? If indeed he has been thus gracious unto thee, bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me praise him for the exceeding riches of his love! What a mercy is it that he hath brought thee into the way of peace! Oh, go on; fear not. Set out daily with a holy, humble boldness to walk with thy God. And for the guiding of thy feet in his way, and that thy steps may not decline from it, be diligent in hearing and reading the word of God. Study it. Pray over it. Mind what encouragement it gives thee: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a

true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. x. 19, 20, &c. What perfect peace is here proclaimed to the children of God! Sin had separated them from him; but there is access through Jesus. He is the way to the Father. He is a new way, in opposition to the old way of works, which upon the fall was shut for ever. He is a living way: all that are alive to God live by the faith of the Son of God. He is a consecrated way; every thing needful for their holy walk being provided in him. And they are required to walk in this way with boldness: trusting to the blood of Jesus, and depending on the intercession of the high priest over the house of God, they have access with confidence into the holiest. It is their undoubted privilege to draw near with a true heart, not like a double-minded man, wavering and unstable, but with full assurance of faith, entirely satisfied that God in Christ has nothing in his breast but love towards them; therefore they should believe in him, and serve him without fear, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, maintaining peace with God through the continual application of the blood of Jesus, and having their bodies washed with pure water; body and soul being cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Oh, may this be my happy experience! May I ever have grace to draw near to my reconciled Father with a good conscience! Yea, Lord, this is my heart's desire. I would walk with thee day by day in perfect peace. Oh, deny me not the request of my lips. Glory be to thy free love, that through Jesus I am suffered to have access into thy presence, and am commanded to come with boldness into the holiest of all. Lo, I come before thee, holy Father! to plead the blood-shedding and the righteousness of thy dear Son; and I hope my plea will be admitted, through the intercession of the high priest of the house of God. Oh, look, thou God of peace, upon the face of thy Beloved! See me in him. I desire to be found in him. And for his sake let the faithful witness for thy love in Jesus abide with me, that, in hearing and reading thy word, in prayer and meditation, he may increase my faith in thee and love to thee.

O God the Holy Ghost! I beseech thee to make practical upon my heart what thou hast revealed in scripture of the Father's love. Deliver me from guilt and condemnation by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Apply it effectually. Apply it continually. Help me to believe with more comfort in my conscience, and with more steadfastness in my walk, that his blood cleanseth from all sin. O blessed Spirit! carry on thy work in my soul. Lead me from faith to faith, that I may at all times have freedom to enter within the vail to a reconciled God and Father, and may be able to maintain peace with him against doubts and fears, against corruptions and enemies. Oh, teach me to draw near to him with a true heart, steadfastly persuaded of his love, and in full assurance of faith. This is thy gracious office: Oh, fulfil it in me, that my heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and my body washed with pure water. Let me find grace sufficient for me, for Jesus' sake; to whom, with thee, O Father, and the eternal Spirit, three Persons in one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAPTER III.

The believer in his heart cleaves to God, and walks with him in love.

This depends entirely upon a good conscience. There can be no love of God unless there be first peace with God. No convinced sinner can love him until he believes him to be reconciled. While guilt remains in the conscience, enmity will keep its place in the heart: for so long as he looks upon his sins unpardoned, and God the just avenger of them, he must consider him as a jealous God, and a consuming fire. In this view there is every thing that can increase his guilty fears; and while these defile the conscience, instead of walking

with God, he would run away from him, and, like the first offenders, he would foolishly try to hide himself from the presence of God.

But when the Holy Spirit has discovered the way of peace, and has enabled the sinner to find peace, being pardoned and justified through faith in Christ Jesus, then he looks upon God in another light. He can view him, according as he has proclaimed himself—the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. Under this endearing character, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in scripture. Thus would he be considered in the covenant of grace—related in the nearest bond of affection to all his children. He is their father, the father of mercies, freely loving, freely forgiving, freely accepting them in the beloved. The Holy Spirit convinces them of it, and sheds the Father's love to them abroad in their hearts; the sense of which sweetly inclines them to love him again. Love begets love. God has put on the tender bowels of an ever-loving parent, and he gives them the affection of dutiful children. They love him because he first loved them. Then it is the delight of their souls to cultivate and improve this love on their part, and it becomes their heaven upon earth to walk with their God in the ways wherein he has appointed to meet them, to love them, and to bless them.

The main point, then, in the Christian walk is to know how to maintain peace in the conscience: because this is the powerful motive upon which the believer first sets out, and it is the great spring which keeps them going on. While his conscience continues pure and undefiled, and the peace of God rules in it, all is well. He does not stop, he does not halt, in the way. But when guilt enters, unbelief certainly follows close after it, and then there is a fresh controversy in the court of conscience. Many doubts arise, and afford matter for strife and debate. The sense of peace is not only disturbed, but is also, for a time, destroyed by such suspicions as these—"Am I freely pardoned?—Is God fully reconciled to me?—Is he still my loving Father? I fear not. I have done so and so—He is certainly displeased with me, and therefore I dare not approach him, as I used to do, with love and confidence." This is an evil conscience. It is not purged from dead works; because guilt is still in it; and this keeps the soul at a distance from God. It begets a coldness and a shyness to him, and, by shutting out the comfortable sense of his love, makes way for fear of wrath. Then the motives to walk with God lose their influence, and an evil heart of unbelief tempts the man to depart from the living God.

Look well then, O my soul! to this leading truth, which has such universal influence over the Christian walk. Attend to the peace of thy conscience. See it be true peace; and mind it be well settled. Learn to maintain it upon gospel motives. The heart follows the determination of conscience; and cleaves to the Lord, or departs from him, according as the conscience excuses or accuses. It is therefore absolutely necessary for our peace that we should know how God has shown himself reconciled in Christ Jesus. The character of him in the scriptures should be studied. Whoever has been enabled to call him, Abba, Father, should implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit for an increase of faith, and should make use of all appointed means for his growth in the knowledge of the love of his heavenly Father. The apostle is upon this subject in Romans v.—a chapter abounding with powerful arguments to establish the peace of God in thy conscience: in order that the love of God may rule in the heart. He gives us this account of the privileges of a justified man. He has peace with God through Jesus Christ—by whom he has a free access to God—is in a state of grace—stands in it by the power of God—has reason to rejoice (come what will) in hope of the glory to be revealed—and whatever he meets with in the way to glory should increase the rejoicing of his hope, and confirm his heart in the love of God to him. Observe how divinely the apostle speaks: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we rejoice in tribulations also, knowing well that tribula-

tion worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us."

What privileges! how many, how free, how blessed are here declared to be the portions of the justified man, which he is to enjoy in his reconciled God! each of them tending to establish peace in his conscience, and love in his heart, that he may delight himself in God and in his ways. The first and chief blessing in experience, which draws after it all the rest, is the Spirit.—

The Holy Ghost is given unto him to be a witness for Jesus, and to shed abroad the Father's love through him. He comes as the Spirit of life to quicken the soul, which had been dead in trespasses and sins, and to bring it to the knowledge of salvation, which he does, secondly, by the gift of faith.

Being justified by faith. He enables the sinner to believe in the finished work of the God-man, and to trust to the free grant of it in the word of God: whereby he sees himself fully justified; through the atonement of Jesus freed from sin and guilt; through the righteousness of Jesus entitled to life and glory: and therefore, thirdly, he has

Peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord. He sees God is at peace with him—perfectly and continually reconciled. The peace is everlasting which was made through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The belief of this quiets and satisfies the sinner's conscience; which being purged by the blood, and justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ his Lord, is at peace, is freed from guilty fears, and is reconciled to God, yea to the justice of God, who can now be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. To what high honour is he then called! He is admitted into friendship with God, and has,

Fourthly, *Access by faith into this grace, wherein he stands*—access to a mercy-seat, to which he is invited to come freely, as a beloved child to an affectionate parent. Boldness and access with confidence are required and commanded. "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace: having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," let us by faith make use of that new and living way, which he hath opened for us. Oh, what a mercy is it thus to have access to a gracious Father! how much is the mercy increased by his settling his children in it! We STAND in it, says the apostle, denoting the being fixed in a state of perfect acceptance, conferred by sovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God. How strengthening to faith! how encouraging to hope! for,

Fifthly, *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Faith relies upon the truth of what God hath promised, and hope waits for the enjoyment of the good in the promise, but more especially for the glory which is to be revealed. This hope of glory is full of rejoicing; because every thing which hope looks at, and draws its joy from, depends on the truth and faithfulness of a covenant God. There can be no failing on his part; and therefore, on the believer's, there can be no disappointment. On this ground hope casts its anchor, both sure and steadfast, and finds all safe during the storms of life, yea, has many a sweet foretaste of the promised glory, brought into the soul by these very storms: for,

Sixthly, *We rejoice in tribulations also.* These are so far from taking away the joy of the justified man, that they tend greatly to increase it, and to make it more holy, as well as more happy. Tribulations produce a plentiful harvest of blessings, they bring forth

Patience, giving occasion to exercise the graces of the Spirit, to find the truth and the power of them, and thereby working submission under the cross to the will of God. "It is good for me," says David, "that I have been afflicted;" his troubles brought him to God—"Before I was afflicted, I went astray." His troubles kept him near to God, dependent on the divine strength to bear them with patience, and for a happy issue out of them. Whereby he learned

Experience; which follows suffering and patience. Tribulations teach us what we are as sinners, and what God is to his reconciled children. They make us sensible of our weakness, and of our being strong only in the Lord—of our misery, and of his comforts—of what we deserve, and of what he saves us from: they bring us to live out of ourselves, upon the sure mercies of a covenant God;

whereby our hope in him being tried, and by trials confirmed, we discover his love to us in suffering, and by daily experience become quite satisfied, that our

Hope is the grace of the Holy Spirit: for it answers the scripture character; it rejoices in tribulation. It has good reason so to do: it experiences God's faithfulness. Every thing promised being made good to us in time, we thereby grow up into the full assurance of hope, that we shall not fail of receiving the promised glory. And this

Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us. He is given to satisfy our hearts of the love of God to us, and to lead us to study the nature and the perfections of his love. Behold! what manner of love, what a free, full, sovereign, and everlasting love, the Father hath bestowed upon us. It is actually bestowed and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost. He shows us how the Father loved us, even when we were without strength; yea, herein God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were sinners and enemies, he gave his Son to live and die for us; much more then, being now justified, we shall be saved from wrath, and brought to glory, through him. How does this commend and set off the love of God! It is the first cause of all the graces here mentioned, and it bestows them upon the most unworthy. Faith, justification by faith, access to God, standing in a justified state, rejoicing in hope of glory, and rejoicing in the way to it even in tribulations, because they exercise and improve patience, and put our graces to such trials, as convince us, that they are the true graces of the Holy Spirit, and that we shall never be ashamed of our hope in God. In this golden chain of experience love is the uppermost link. It was the first, and draws after it all the rest. The free love of the Father gave his Son for us, and with him gave us all things. The same love has now given his Spirit to us, and he has enabled us to know and to believe that we are justified, have access to a reconciled God, stand acccpted before him, &c. and that he is our loving God and Father in Jesus. The sense of this warms the heart, and sweetly and powerfully influences the affections to delight in and to walk in love with such an exceedingly gracious and merciful God.

In this delightful portion of scripture the Holy Spirit teaches us how he brings sinners to know that God loves them. It is by believing in the righteousness and atonement of the Son of God. Hence spring peace and love—peace with God in the conscience, and love to God in the heart. There is an inseparable connexion between those two graces: the one cannot exist without the other. Whoever knows the God of peace, will find that God is love; for, being justified by faith, he will thereby see that God is at peace with him, and himself in a state of free acceptance before him, in which he shall stand and be kept safe, until he receive the promised glory; the hope of which will be confirmed by his daily experience of God's faithfulness, making all things, even tribulations, work together for his good in the way to glory: thus will the Holy Spirit satisfy him of the love of God to his soul. And the persuasion of his love begets love; it softens the hard heart; it warms the cold heart; it works kindly upon all the affections, and, by setting before them every possible good to be enjoyed in their reconciled God, it mightily disposes them to seek their supreme happiness in walking humbly and closely with him.

Attend then, O my soul! to this scripture. Meditate upon the experience of which it treats. Pray for it. Pray for more of it. And above all, observe the great truth here taught thee by the Holy Ghost, namely, that thou canst not have any true love of God, but what arises from the sense of his being at peace with thee in Jesus. Oh, beware of false teachers! for there is great reason. Many talk big of their loving God for his own inherent loveliness—a fundamental mistake. Mystics, quakers, natural-religion-men, dreaming metaphysicians, and the motley tribe of moralists and deists, pretend to love an absolute God, without viewing him in the covenant of grace, or as he has revealed himself in the incarnation of his Son. There has been no love of this kind in any heart upon earth for near six thousand years. Adam in paradise might love him thus. But when driven out of paradise for sin, he could love

him so no more. The promised seed of the woman, the word made flesh, became then the object of his faith, and the only ground of his love. The scripture has clearly determined this—"We love him, because he first loved us—And in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." When the Holy Ghost has taught this love of God to sinners, and by believing has manifested it to their hearts, then they love him upon Christian principles; and sinners cannot love him upon any other. They love him for that infinite mercy which led him to send his only-begotten Son into the world to finish the salvation of his people. They love him for sending the Holy Ghost to enable them to see the everlasting sufficiency of this salvation, and to believe the record of God concerning it; whereby they come to experience how much the Father loved them. This is heaven begun. The Father's love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost is the foretaste of glory. Whoever enjoys it has found what is more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Oh, it is indeed heaven upon earth. To preserve it, to improve it, is become the one study of the happy believer. The panting of his soul is after more of this love. The prayer of his faith is, O thou eternal Spirit! help me so to walk with my most loving Father, as that I may maintain peace with him in my conscience, and a growing love to him in my heart, until thou bring me to the enjoyment of everlasting peace and love!

The prayer of a righteous man prevaileth much, being offered with energy. By the love of the Spirit it is answered. He not only preserves, but also increases, his own graces. He leads the believer to fresh discoveries of the Father's love, and puts him into possession of the exceeding rich treasures of it. He helps him to draw very strong arguments for the comfort of his heart from the perfect FREENESS of divine love. Thus he reasons:

Although I am beset with temptations, and assaulted with corruptions, and in a world of troubles, yet I need not fear but God will bring me safe through all; for I know he loves me. It is plain he does: I could never have loved him unless he had first freely loved me. My love is only the reflection of his. I had been convinced of sin, but it was not from myself: the conviction was of God. I have been convinced of righteousness; and I put my whole trust in the righteousness of Jesus. He is the only ground of my hope. I now rest my soul upon the sure foundation which he hath laid. And this faith is not of myself. It is the gift of God. I ascribe it to his sovereign grace, that I have been enabled to look upon the Father, as reconciled to me, pardoning me through the blood-shedding of his Son, accounting me righteous through the obedience of his Son, and in him accepting, loving, and blessing me. How could I experience these things but by the power of the Holy Ghost? And for what did I deserve to experience them? The reason must be found in the riches of his own free grace. Did the Father foresee any thing good in me for which he chose me in his Son? Was it for any worthiness of mine, that the Son vouchsafed to take flesh, and to live and to die for me? Was it for any foreseen works, faithfulness, or diligence in means, that the Holy Ghost called me to know, to believe, and to enjoy the Father's love through the Son's salvation? Oh, no. Away with such thoughts. I dare claim nothing for mine own but sin and shame. Not unto me, Lord! not unto me, but unto thee be all the glory. It was the good pleasure of thine own will which chose me before the foundation of the world, and accepted me in the beloved; and now I know that thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. I experience the happy fruit and effect of them. I am brought to believe in thee, and to love my God and Father, which I am satisfied I could never have done if thy free love had not first purposed to save me, and now carried thy purposes into execution. To the praise of the glory of thy distinguishing grace, I am in possession of the things which accompany salvation. Oh, give me more grace, that I may daily make a better use of them, and may return thee better praise for thy free gifts of free grace.

It is free, and it is also COVENANT love. This is another of its divine properties: God commendeth his love towards the heirs of promise by giving them full security for its unchangeableness: and this view the Holy Spirit opens to

them for the support of their faith in times of trial. When they are walking in darkness, and have no light, troubled on every side, without are fightings, within are fears; when in great heaviness through failings in duty, through risings of corruption, or through manifold temptations, then he discovers to them the treasures of covenant love, and enables them to draw rich consolation from that heavenly store-house. An heir of promise under his teaching is often supported in this way: It is true, I am in trouble, but not forsaken. What if every thing I have and am in myself makes against me, yet God is on my side, a covenant God: for I believe the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and with manifold wisdom ordered all things relating to the heirs of promise. For their sakes, and to end all strife in their consciences about the certainty of their salvation, it pleased the blessed Trinity to enter into covenant, and to confirm their covenant by oath; thus giving them two immutable things to trust in, in which it is impossible for God to lie. Oh, how strengthening to faith is this view of the unchangeableness of covenant love! If it be but a man's covenant, being properly signed and sealed, no one disannulleth or addeth thereto. And who shall disannul or add to the covenant of the Trinity? The creature cannot. God will not. His purpose of bringing many sons to glory is unalterably fixed in his own mind; and in order to make it a sure ground for their faith, he confirmed his immutable covenant by his immutable oath. On this security I rest my soul. A covenant God has enabled me to trust in his covenant engagements. Hence I see every thing relating to my salvation absolutely certain in the counsel and covenant of God; and I look upon my faith to be one of the effects of my being in the covenant. And faith as a covenant gift is an immutable gift. What a blessing is it that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance! It has been given me on the behalf of Christ to believe. And is not this from covenant love? What else could bring me to trust in covenant faithfulness? Therefore by believing I have immutable things to depend upon for the certainty of my salvation. Upon them would I stay my soul, as well I may, and fix my heart upon them. Oh, that I could bring more glory to my covenant God by trusting him with unshaken confidence! His love to me demands it at my hands. His love contrived the plan of salvation. Love provided every thing needful to carry it into execution. The evidence which he has given of this was from the overflowings of love. His word of promise, ratified by covenant, confirmed by oath, the oath of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, made to satisfy the heirs of promise of the immutability of the divine will concerning them—Oh, what miracles of love are these! And all to assure them that the heart of Jehovah is invariably towards them for good! Yes, Lord; this is the great love wherewith thou lovest me; and this is the evidence of thy love. Thou hast brought me to believe it, and put some honour upon it. I desire to trust to thy covenant engagements without wavering. Establish, strengthen, settle my faith. Increase it from day to day, that I may grow in the knowledge and experience of that love which passeth knowledge: for

It is a free, a covenant, and also an EVERLASTING love. This is another of its most glorious properties. His love knows neither beginning nor end. It is without variableness or shadow of turning. The heart of God is always one and the same towards his chosen people; for he loveth them freely. The motives to it were all in and from his own breast. The covenant was distinguishing love, secured to the heirs of promise by the most solemn engagements. And this crowns all. His love is of the same date with the covenant—not only before all worlds, but also from eternity. Therefore it is frequently called in scripture an everlasting covenant, and covenant love is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Here is a never-failing source of comfort to a believing heart. Meditate, O my soul! upon it. Consider what God hath done for thee, and give him the glory of his precious love. Has he not called thee by his Spirit, working in thee in due season? Hast thou not obeyed the call? Dost thou not

depend upon the finished work of God thy Saviour? Art thou not justified freely by faith in him? Art thou not seeking daily to mortify the works of the flesh and thy earthly members, and that thy mind may be drawn up to high and heavenly things? Certainly these are good proofs of the purposes of the Father's love towards thee; because these are the happy effects of his purposes now taking place in my soul. Oh! how great should this consideration establish and confirm thy faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed by Christ, and thereby kindle thy love towards God! He has indeed drawn thee by the sweet attraction of his Spirit unto himself, and he has explained to thee the motive for his so doing —"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." His love, discovered to thee in time, is the fruit of his love before time; for the one is the effect of the other. If love had not been always in his heart towards thee, thy heart could never have been drawn in love to him. But he has drawn it. And thou art seeking to have it drawn more closely to him. Is it not thy daily wish, Oh for more love to my gracious Father! what a love has he shown to me!—what a free, covenant everlasting love! And yet, alas! what poor returns do I make him! Holy Spirit of love, raise and exalt my affections, and let the consideration of the wonderful love of my heavenly Father to me increase mine to him; and let mine abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all sensible experience.

The Holy Spirit, who is the great teacher and manifester of the Father's love, has revealed these properties of it in scripture for the establishment of the faith of the children of God. He would have them to believe, assuredly, that God is their father, not in name only, but in deed and in truth; that he has the bowels of the tenderest parent, and that he freely, fully, everlastingly loves them in his dear Son. As he loves him, so he loves them. He embraces the head and the members with the same affection. And because they can hardly believe this in times of trial and trouble, the Holy Spirit would therefore satisfy their hearts of it by discovering to them the unchangeableness of their Father's love, as it has been manifested in the divine covenant, and confirmed with the divine oath: in both which the witness of the Father to his children is given in this manner:—I have freely loved you; I have engaged to love you, and I will ever be mindful of my covenant engagements:—as I live, saith the Lord, I will love you unto the end; yea, I will bless you with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus; what he, your elder brother, is now in glory, that will my love make you: the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on you.

These are faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptation. O evil heart of unbelief! what pretence hast thou to reason against the truth of them? O ye of little faith! wherefore do ye doubt of receiving the goodness of them? Your Father is not a man, that he should lie; neither the Son of man, that he should alter his purpose. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Yea, the purpose of his heart, spoken with his mouth, shall be made good with his arm: all his perfections stand engaged to establish his faithful word; and therefore it is a safe ground to build and rest upon. Trusting to it, the believer may boldly claim the promised blessings of his Father's love, and, with a hope that will never make him ashamed, he may expect a growing enjoyment of its free, covenant, and eternal blessings.

Well then, O my soul! thou hast considered the subject. What are thy sentiments of the love of the Father? Are they such as the scripture teaches? Take heed of error. A little mistake here will have dreadful effects upon thy walk. Dost thou believe that thou, coming to the Father through faith in the life and death of his coequal Son, art pardoned and justified before him, and that this thy coming to the Father through the Son is from the grace of the Spirit? Therefore, the Three that bear record in heaven do witness to thy being an object of covenant love. Does this witness keep thy conscience quiet, and thy heart happy? Canst thou plead it against guilt and fear, and maintain the influence of it in dark and trying times? The love of thy heavenly Father is immutable: dost thou experience it to be so? It is everlasting. Canst thou depend upon

it as such? It has provided all blessings for thee in Jesus. Art thou receiving them out of his fulness, grace for grace? It is proposed to thy faith in John xvii. and in Eph. iii. as a never-failing spring of consolation. Read, and try whether thou art practically acquainted with what is there written. Examine the character of the Father's love; and, be assured, what is not agreeable to it, is not the teaching of the Holy Spirit. His office in thy soul is to witness to what he hath revealed in the scripture; to explain it to thine understanding; to make it the ground of thy faith, and the enjoyment of thy heart. Dost thou then understand, and believe, and enjoy the Father's love according to what the Holy Spirit has testified of it?

Perhaps thou art clear in thine understanding, but, through the weakness of thy faith, hast but little enjoyment of the love of God. Why is thy faith weak? Search into the cause (depend on it, God is not the cause), and having discovered it, inquire into the remedy. There is provision made in the covenant for all the infirmities of thy faith; for it was well ordered in all things and sure, and thy faith was well ordered and sure—infallible securities were provided in the covenant to make it sure. That thou shouldst have it, that thou shouldst keep it, and keep it too unto the end, the blessed Trinity have engaged by their immutable counsel and their immutable oath. Therefore thou art now kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The power of God, which is thy keeper, has given thee faith, and keeps thy faith, that it fail not. Thou and it are well kept. A covenant God has the charge of both. Almighty love watches over thee; and underneath are the everlasting arms. Till these fail, thy faith cannot fail. Oh what powerful motives are these to induce thee to believe without wavering! Consider them carefully: and may the Lord render them the means of strengthening thy faith, and of thereby enabling thee to cleave more closely in love to thy heavenly Father!

It may be thou art hindered from living by unshaken faith, because thou hast so little love to God. He ought to have all thy heart and soul, and mind and strength; but it grieves thee to observe what a small part he has of them. This view is always humbling. Our love at best is not what it ought to be. It is not constant: it ebbs and flows. It is not perfect: the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. It is not what God deserves, as payment for love received: who will compute the full value of his love to one redeemed sinner? On earth it surpasseth knowledge: in heaven it surpasseth all returns of praise. The highest love of glorified saints is only acknowledgment, but not payment. They are perfectly humble, and therefore willing that God should have all the glory of their salvation. To him they ascribe it. The same mind in thee would refine thy love, and make it something like theirs. When thou art considering thy love to God, and ashamed at the sight of it, then look at his. Look especially at his when thine is little. Believing views of his will increase thine. Thine has nothing else to excite it, or to nourish it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyself with the sparks of thy love to God, but with the pure constant flame of his love to thee. His is to keep up thine. His is the first cause, and thine is but the effect. The experience of his will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unsettled, cold, and dull, then study the divine properties of his: these rightly understood will increase, settle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love: the sense of it will comfort thy conscience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee: while thou art musing, the fire will kindle: it will break out. Thou wilt speak with thy tongue praise and thanksgiving to thy loving God and Father.

Thou art willing then, O my soul! and ready to set out to follow thy God. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit thou hast chosen him for thy portion, and in a constant dependence upon his grace thou hast taken his way for thy daily walk. How great is the love, wherewith he loveth thee! Survey it. Measure, if thou canst, the dimensions of it in thine own particular case. The more thou art acquainted with it, the readier wilt thou be to give him all the glory of it, and to make such acknowledgments as these:

I speak the truth in Christ; I lie not; my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost that, being justified by faith, I have found peace and free

access to a reconciled God. We are agreed; and now I desire to walk with him. He is my Father in Jesus; and I know he has bowels of the tenderest affection for me. I ought not, it would be base in me, to question it, since he has shed his love abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost; who has made me of one mind, of one heart, and of one way with himself. His way is become mine: for he has reconciled me to it by causing me to see that he chose me freely, as an object of his electing love; that he gave his Son to finish salvation work for me; and that he has now given his Spirit to me, who has called me, and given me ears to hear, who has bestowed on me faith and hope, and has enabled me to look upon these as fruits of the Father's covenant grace and everlasting favour. Oh what exceeding riches of love are these! If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. What am I, that I should be accepted in the beloved? His Father, mine. He sees me, loves me, yea blesses me in him. My title is clear to all spiritual blessings, because God, being my God in Jesus, all things are mine. He will make them all work together for my good. He that withheld not his own Son, but gave him for me, how shall he not with him freely give me all things? Having his free grant of them in the word of promise, and trusting to his faithfulness, I have set out to walk with my divine Friend and Father, hoping to enjoy his loving presence all the way to heaven. I would not aim at getting any new title to his love, but to have new enjoyment. Every day I am seeking for more knowledge, and for more experience of his abundant love to me in his beloved Son. And for this end I would walk close with him in his way—not to buy his love, it is inestimable—not to merit it, free grace and merit cannot stand together—not that I may deserve it for my walk, but may freely receive it of him in my walk—not that he may give it me for walking with him, but that in walking with him I may enjoy what he has already given me. His love is a free gift. I would by faith enjoy it in time, as I hope by sense to enjoy it in eternity. Whatever blessing, strength, victory, or comfort, I stand in need of, I look to the fulness which he has laid up in Jesus, and from thence I receive it. I read my title to it, and I take possession of it, for nothing done in me or by me, now or at any other time, but only in or for the free grace of his Father and my Father. While I can live thus by simple faith, I find I am enabled to go on well. The sense of his free, covenant, everlasting love, keeps my heart happy, and makes walking with him my delight. Oh that he may enable me to press forward, that I may hold my confidence, and the rejoicing of my hope steadfast unto the end! And why need I doubt of it, since he has me in his keeping? His love has bound itself to me by covenant engagements, which are my full security for what he has declared: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

These desires, I am persuaded, are from thee, O Father of mercies! I could never have sought my happiness in thy love, unless thou hadst first loved me. Oh grant me then the desire of my heart! What thy good Spirit has put me upon seeking, let me by his grace find continually. He has manifested to me thy perfect reconciliation to thy people through the life and death of Jesus. It has been given me on his behalf to believe this. I have therefore taken thee for my God and my portion, and I would so walk with thee as to obtain a growing knowledge and experience of thy love. For this cause I bow my knees unto thee, holy Father. Oh, hear and answer the prayer of faith. Give me grace to walk with thee in love all the way to glory. I ask it in the name of Jesus; for thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named: one Father, one family, one love. Thou receivest all thy children, whether in heaven or earth, into the same near relation, and embracest them with the same dear affection in thy beloved Son. Oh what a mercy is this! Blessed, for ever blessed be thy fatherly love, which chose me to be of thy family, and which has brought me to know that I am a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. I thank thee for giving me the desire to live as such, and to walk worthy of my high calling. Oh grant me then, according to the riches of thy glory (out of thine infinite treasury of grace, and to the praise of the glory of thy grace) to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. He is the promise of the Father. All thy children have their new birth and every faculty of the

new man from him; and by the working of his mighty power they are kept, as well as renewed, day by day: for without him they can do nothing. Of this he has thoroughly convinced me. I know I cannot call thee Father, nor believe in thee, nor love thee, but by thy Spirit.

O my God! strengthen me effectually by his grace in the inner man, for every purpose of spiritual life. Whatever he has engaged to do in thy children, let him do it in me, that through his presence and power Christ may dwell in my heart by faith. Oh let him continually discover to me mine interest in Christ, and open to me the exceeding riches of thy love in him. Holy Father, let thy good Spirit abide with me, that I may know for certain Christ is one with me, and I am one with him, and may thereby be able to maintain constant fellowship with him—he dwelling in me, and I in him. Oh may I thus live continually by the faith of the Son of God, depending always for acceptance with thee upon his atonement and his righteousness, and so may find the happy fruit of his prayer to thee—"O righteous Father! I have declared to my disciples thy name, and will declare it, that the love, wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them." Thou didst hear; thou hast answered, times out of number, the request of thy beloved Son. Lord God, answer it to me. Let me rejoice in thy love, and find it to be the same to me, as to him. Let thy good Spirit root me and ground me in the knowledge of thy love to me in Jesus. Oh, grant me to be deeply rooted in the experience of it, that my faith, working by love, may bring forth much fruit to thy glory, and I may become so grounded in love, as to stand unshaken, like a house built upon a rock, against every attack made upon thy love to me. O my God and Father! my heart is naked and open to thee. Thou knowest the secrets of it. Thou seest how fervently I pray for the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. My prayer comes from a feeling sense of my want of him, and from a dependence on thy promise to give the Spirit to them that ask him. Lord, I ask. Grant me to be strengthened by him with every needful gift and grace in the inner man. Send him to manifest plainer and plainer my union with Jesus, in order to my keeping up communion with him; that, having him dwelling in my heart by faith, I may be so established in the experience of thy love to me in him, as to be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of thy love. All the saints comprehend it; but the saints below less than they above: and some of them below comprehend more than others. I know but little: O my God! increase my knowledge of thy love in Jesus. Whereunto I have attained, establish me; and keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of it. Help me to survey it, so far as faith is able, in its most glorious dimensions, and to praise thee for mine experience of its rich mercies. Holy Father, teach me still more by thy Spirit of the boundless freeness, and of the endless fulness of thy love—let me know thy love in Christ, which passeth knowledge. Although I cannot know it, as it is, my limited understanding being incapable of measuring the infinity of thy love, yet, for this very reason, let me be daily studying to know more of it—growing up into Christ Jesus by faith—abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost—and increasing in the love of God. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity! let me thus partake of the fulness of grace below, grace for grace, till I partake of the fulness of glory above—that I may be filled with all the fulness which is of God, with which thou hast promised to fill thy children in earth and heaven. Oh magnify thy love towards me according to its greatness, and not according to my deserts, or to my prayers. I know thou canst do exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or think, according to the power that worketh effectually in me. Thy power, engaged to act for me, is the support of my faith, and mine encouragement in my prayer. It is an infinite and almighty power, which has graciously begun, and has hitherto prosperously carried on, the good work in my soul. To it all things are possible. Lord forbid I should doubt of thy granting the petitions, which I have been offering up unto thee in thy Son's name. That which thou hast promised, thou art able to perform. O my God and Father! set thy power to work more effectually in me. Let the Spirit of might enlarge my thoughts of, and my faith in, thy precious love. Let me experience daily how much more thou art able to

do than I have yet obtained; to give, than I have yet asked; to increase, than I have yet thought. And whatever increase thou givest, may it draw out mine affections in greater love to thee, and to thy ways, and so be the means of bringing more glory to thee. For thy love in Jesus the whole family, in heaven and earth, is ascribing honour and praise. Accept my thanks, holy Father, together with theirs. To thee be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. *Amen.*

CHAPTER IV.

The believer goes on successfully while he walks by faith in a constant dependence upon his reconciled God and loving Father.

THE leading principle upon which he sets out is this: God is my God and Father. He is perfectly reconciled unto me; and my conscience is at peace with him through faith in his beloved Son. He loves me in him: he has manifested it plainly to me; and now my heart would cleave to him as my most tender parent. I would rest in my love to him, as he rests in his love to me. It is entirely through the grace of the eternal Spirit that I have been enabled thus to believe in the finished work of Jesus, and to experience the Father's love in him: by which means I have been satisfied of the love of the ever-blessed Trinity to my soul. Father, Son, and Spirit, have covenanted to make me an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. From my belief and experience of these truths I have been enabled to choose God for my portion. His will is become mine. His appointed way is my course. And now I desire so to walk with him as to maintain in my conscience the peace of God, and in my heart the love of God. I do not expect any new title to those inestimable graces: my claim is good and valid under Christ. I would not disparage it by supposing that my close walk with God was to make any atonement for my sins, or to be the least part of my justifying righteousness: I have these already, and perfectly too in Jesus. The enjoyment of them is the thing I want. I am seeking for more of that peace with, and love to, the Father, to which I am entitled in his Son. His fulness, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, is mine. A free grant of it has passed in the court of heaven, has been revealed in the record of truth, and I, by believing, have accepted the grant. I am in possession of its privileges, and am enjoying its blessings. On the fulness of Jesus I live this day. Out of it I hope to be receiving every grace, which I shall want for my safe and happy walk, with his Father and my Father. Bless the Lord, O my soul! for what thou knowest and hast experienced of his abundant grace; which has enabled thee thus to resolve to walk with thy reconciled God and loving Father. This day thou art called upon to maintain peace with him in thy conscience, and love to him in thy heart; peace like his, flowing from the sense of being perfectly reconciled to thee—love like his, the happy fruit of his unchangeable love to thee. Whatever thou meetest with in thy work or warfare, ought not to lessen, but exercise and improve those graces. Never forget that he is thy God—the God of peace. He stands related to thee in the dearest and most indissoluble bond of love. He is thy Father in Jesus. Keep the sense of this always fresh upon thy mind, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Nothing will be able to stop thee in the way to heaven, or to seduce thee out of it; but every thing will bring thee forward. Whilst thou canst maintain peace and love, thou wilt go on prosperously against guilt and self-righteousness, against the wiles and assaults of thy spiritual foes, against the world which lieth in wickedness, and against every inward and outward trial. The Lord being on thy side, all these shall work together under him for thy good; and they shall be the means of making thee walk safely in the way, and of bringing thee happily to the end of it. The apostle has given us the whole plan in a few words—"WE WALK," says he, "BY FAITH, and not by sight." We direct our christian course by believing, and not by seeing. Faith is to us the evidence of things not seen, and the ground of our hoping to enjoy them We believe, upon the authority of God's word, that they are what he

describes them to be; for faith, as a grace of the Spirit, consists in giving credit to what God says. If it be a truth proposed to the understanding, faith relies upon the infallible word: if it be a promise, faith depends upon the arm of God to make it good. And whatever he has promised faith (when it is as it should be) does not stagger at difficulties, but rests fully persuaded that what God hath promised he is able also to perform. Faith looks at the word spoken, and overlooks seeming impossibilities: THUS SAITH THE LORD—that is enough for faith—full of satisfying evidence: for it knows, that to speak and to do are the same thing with an unchangeable God.

How many errors in judgment, and consequent mistakes in practice, prevail at this day, chiefly arising from confounding faith with its fruits; and from our distinguishing between the word of God believed and what will follow upon believing it aright. Thus, some make assurance to be of the essence of faith, others make appropriation, and many make it consist in an impression upon the mind that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. These are fruits: what faith should produce, but not what it is. These are effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. A heliever should be exhorted to make his calling and election sure; for it is his privilege. He ought to give all diligence to attain assurance, to appropriate Christ with all his blessings to himself, and to be clearly persuaded that Christ loved him and gave himself for him. These are blessed fruits of believing. May God give his people more of them! But then the tree must be before the fruits, and the fruits grow upon the tree. Faith is first; and faith derives its heing from believing the word of God; and all its fruits are continued acts of believing. And when you hear of believing, do you not always think of something spoken? You cannot separate these two in your mind. Something has been said and proposed to you before your belief can be called for. If nothing has been said, belief has no exercise. Faith and the word of God therefore are relatcd, as the effect and the cause; because faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. What God hath spoken in his word demands belief from all that hear it. When faith cometh by hearing it, then we assent to the truth of what God has said, and we rely upon his faithfulness to make good what he has promised. Assurance is this faith grown to its full stature; but we are not born six feet high. Appropriation is a very comfortahle acting of faith, when a man is persuaded of his interest in covenant mercies, and, from what he then feels, can say, Christ loved me and gave himself for me; but he has not this comfort in times of heaviness; he may be walking in darkness and having no light, yea in the hidings of the Lord's countenance; and yet, even then, he may trust simply to what God hath spoken; which is true faith, and more exalted faith, than that which draws its evidence from its appropriating acts and its present experience: the more a man trusts to sense, the less he lives by faith; for sensible feelings are not faith. Impressions are not believing. I see the sun; I hear a sound; I feel an object: faith has no place in these instances. Its essence is believing and trusting what God hath spoken. If his word be believed, and by believing the conscience find peace, and the heart joy; these are joy and peace IN believing: they come from believing; are its effects; and no more enter into the essence of faith than comfortable feelings do into the essence of man. He is as truly a man, when miserable, as he is when comfortable.

These mistakes should be carefully guarded against, hecause they are chiefly pernicious to the children of God; who are kept by them from growing up into assurance, into appropriation, and into the sensible experience of God's love to them in Christ Jesus. They are puzzled—they are misled, by being told they have no faith, if they have no assurance, &c. They examine themselves, but cannot find any such faith. This discourages them. They are tempted to think they have no true faith, because they have not what certain persons talk of. But if they would adhere strictly to the word of God, and would take their ideas from it, they would see how simple and plain a thing believing is, and would soon be satisfied that they were true believers: which conviction would have many blessed effects, especially these—it would put them upon seeking for an increase of faith, and upon expecting the proper fruits of faith. What nourishes

faith, ripens them; for they cannot be produced so long as persons are doubting whether they have any faith at all. They would see how desirable it is to believe, without doubt or wavering; what honour it puts upon God's word, what comfort it brings to them: and they would be waiting in the appointed means for grace to maintain, for grace to improve their faith, that they may be going on from faith to faith. While this was their end and aim, faith in act and exercise, maintained and improved, would bring in daily growing evidence of their being indeed partakers of the faith of God's elect. Living by faith, walking by faith, would demonstrate to them their spiritual life and walk, as plainly as natural life and walk can be demonstrated by any outward actions.

Here is great need, O my soul! to read the scripture, and to pray for the Spirit of wisdom. Read; pray much; lest thou shouldst err concerning the faith. Every error will be a stumbling-block in the way of thy holy walk, and make thee tired of it, or seduce thee out of it. Let it be one of thy daily petitions —Lord, save me from all mistakes concerning the faith of the Gospel; and let the word of God, by which faith cometh and groweth, be thy daily study. This is thy present business. Now set out, trusting to what God hath spoken, and relying on what he hath promised. On this principle proceed, as it is laid down by the apostle, Col. ii. 6. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." He is expressing his joy at his beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, and he would teach them how to maintain their faith throughout their Christian course. How did you receive Christ at first? Was it not by believing? Receiving Christ and believing in him, are, in John i. 12, supposed to mean the same thing, And in John xvii. 20, 21, our Lord says, that they who believe in him through the word are one with him. Christ, then, is received by faith; and by the same faith, by the belief of the same word of God, we walk in him, so as to be rooted and grounded and established in the faith. Our walk is in him, not any thing distinct from him, but is the effect of union with him. By him we live, *in* him we walk—rooted in him, we grow as a branch in the vine—built up in him, we are fixed as a building on a sure foundation, and thereby we become established and strengthened in the faith. Every step we take is by faith, by the same faith, wherewith Christ was received.

He must be received always as he was received once. There is no change of object, and there must be no change of faith, but the same continued trust on his word, and the same dependence on his promised strength. We never set out to walk with a reconciled God till we are one with Christ by faith, and know our union with him; and our walk is in consequence of this. If we go on at all, it is by communion with him. We can receive only out of his fulness grace for grace, to make us willing and able to go forward. Our fellowship with him is in every part and in every moment of our walk; and this is as necessary as our fellowship with the air and elements of this world is to every thing that concerns our natural walk. Our wisdom to guide our steps, our progress in the way, our courage and strength, our warfare and victory, every grace and every blessing, is received by faith, and is the effect of our communion with Jehovah Jesus. We trust in his word, we rely on his arm, we wait on his faithfulness, and so go forward: for he makes good what he had promised to give us in our walk, which confirms the peace of God, establishes our heart in the love of God, increases our faith, and thereby makes our daily walk more comfortable to us, and more glorious to him.

But if faith consist in believing and trusting the word of God, it may be required, How shall we know the difference between true and false, between dead and living faith? It may be known from the cause. The fruit of the Spirit is faith. He produces it. It is his gift, bestowed by his operation, continued by his power, increased by his blessing, and carried on to the end, by his never leaving nor forsaking his own work. And he makes it known to be his. He gives eyes to see it, and hearts to acknowledge it. Therefore the apostle says of them who have received the Spirit of God, that they KNOW the things which are freely given to them of God: by faith they both know the reality, and also taste the sweetness of those free gifts of free grace.

It may be known from the effects. Dead faith brings forth nothing. Living

faith is fruitful. It produces a hearty trust in the truth of what God hath spoken, and a quiet reliance on the faithfulness of what God hath promised. It gives him credit for the finished salvation of his Son, and puts honour upon his record concerning it; whereby peace is received into the conscience, and love into the heart. Upon which there follows a settled dependence upon this reconciled God and loving Father, for the fulfilling of every promise; and this is improved by daily experience. He that trusteth in the Lord is never confounded. God is faithful His promises cannot fail. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. The Lord God will be a sun and shield unto him; the Lord will give him grace and glory.

As for the hypocrites, it is not so with them. The Holy Spirit was not the author of their faith. It was a fancy of their own, formed in their heads without any warrant from God. There was no life in it, and no living effects from it. There was the form, and nothing more. They made a profession, but never came to any enjoyment. They had no vital union, and therefore they could not have any real communion with Christ. They could not, as the apostle expresses it, walk IN him, and therefore in the hour of temptation they fell away, and came to nothing. Take heed then, O my soul, of mistakes. Examine carefully of what sort thy faith is. Bring it to the standard of scripture; and see what went before believing; see whether thou dost now from thy heart believe what God hath spoken: wait for the effects. Dost thou so trust his word as to take him for thy God and thy portion? Art thou walking with him? and art thou depending on him to bestow the promised graces and blessings on thee in thy walk? If this be thine experience, thou art set out well: go on. Remember where every thing relating to thy walk is to be had. The Father's love has laid it all up in the Son's fulness; and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to teach thee how to receive out of it grace for grace. He teaches by his word. With this in thy hand, and his light in thine understanding, read and study what he has promised thee for thy safe, happy, and holy walk. Take no step without the direction of his word, and expect at every step that he will make good to thee what he has promised. Thou wilt very soon find the necessity of this dependence upon him; for, ere thou hast well begun thy walk, thou wilt be called upon to exercise thy faith and put it to trial. Thou wilt meet with many things in thee averse to this holy walk, and many more to distress thee in it. The body of sin, the old man, the flesh, with its affections and lusts, are still in thee. It is of their nature to be lusting, and to be always putting forth some of their filthy motions, in order to draw thee to walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit. The tempter helps them all he can. He knows how to improve them to his own interest; and, from what is passing within thee, there be a sight and sense of sin that, if he can get thee to look at it in his view, he will act upon thy legal and self-righteous tempers, and will inject such vile insinuations as these against the Lord and against his Christ:

How is it I am yet the subject of sin? It is still in me. It cleaves to me, as the flesh to my bones; and it mixes so with my duties, that I cannot perform them without it. I sometimes fear I am nothing but sin. When I attempt to walk with God, ere I set out something evil arises within me, and stops me. Some proud unbelieving thought, some sensual affection, some worldly disposition, some corruption or other, is ever at hand to hinder my course. What, then, must I think of myself? I scarce know what. Things, I see, do not grow better. I have been long hoping for it; but I find there still dwelleth no good thing in me: so that I am almost ready to question the truth of my grace, and it is with great difficulty I can keep up any peace in my conscience.

When the believer is attacked in this manner (and who is not at some time or other), how is he to defend himself? Will his skilfulness in the word of righteousness and his faith in the word of reconciliation keep him safe in the hour of temptation? Yea. By the grace of the Holy Spirit the lessons before learnt will be enforced, and brought into use. This is the time to maintain faith in the atonement, and in the righteousness of the God-man. Now it is to be tried in the fire; and it is put to the trial, that it may come out of it, like gold, proved to be sterling metal, and refined from its dross—better in every respect for having

gone through the fire. The trial of faith is far more precious than that of gold which perisheth. It is therefore put into the furnace, that the believer may know the truth of it, and may experience the blessings of it. Faith conflicting with unbelief is a good fight—sometimes sharp, but always profitable. The flesh may be weak and ready to yield; faith may be hard put to it; but victory is certain. During the battle, the warrior is invincible in the whole armour of God. He takes to him the shield of faith, and holds it up against the fiery darts of Satan. He draws out the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and with it he defeats Satan. He consults or remembers a scripture suitable to his present case, and this, being set home by the Holy Spirit, puts an end to the engagement, and restores and settles sweet peace in the conscience. How often has he applied the following passage, which the Lord speaks concerning his true Israelites, Jer. xxxii. 38, 39, 40, 41? "They SHALL be my people, and I WILL he their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me FOR EVER, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant for them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me; yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good."

What strong consolation is there in this scripture! Every sentence has an argument in it, tending to establish peace with God, and to maintain it in the midst of war. How quieting and satisfying to the troubled conscience in his covenant purpose! "They SHALL be my people, and I WILL be their God." They shall, because I will. My will shall make them willing. And in the day of my power, when my purpose takes place, I will give them one heart, turned to myself, and one way, to walk with me by faith, as obedient children with their loving Father. This I will do for them that they may fear me FOR EVER, that the fear of offending me may rule always and by all means in their hearts.

Oh, what promises are these! What can weak faith require farther to silence its doubts? How great is the goodness of God to his children, who, knowing their frame, and whereof they are made, for the good of them and of their children after them, has laid such a foundation for their faith, that they may build on it, and not be afraid! yea, standing on it they may fight the good fight of faith, assured of victory.

I will make, says their God, an everlasting covenant for them; a covenant ordered in all things and sure, by the counsel and oath of the blessed Trinity, the two immutable things, in which it is impossible God should lie: The mountains shall depart and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from them; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on them. My covenant was made for them, and shall be made good to them. As I live, saith the Lord, I will not turn away from them to do them good. I will never change my purpose, nor alter the word that is gone out of my mouth. I mean nothing but good to them. My heart is fixed upon it. And I will not leave the event to them. They shall not have the management of my purposes, nor have any power to defeat them. My will to do them good shall not depend on their will, or on their faithfulness, or on any thing in themselves. I have taken all their concerns into mine own hands, and I will conduct them all to the praise of the glory of mine own grace. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me—they SHALL not depart from me. They are not the cause of their not departing, but I am. I have taken it upon myself. I will give them grace to walk close with me, and to fear me always. I have covenanted for all, the means as well as the end, and I will keep them by my almighty power till they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good." This confirms all the rest. His purpose of doing them good, his executing it, his continuing it, his increasing it through time and through eternity, is a matter of rejoicing to the Lord God. He delights in it. It always was and always will be the joy of his heart, his crown and glory. He will not, he cannot be deprived of his joy. Consider this, thou poor distressed soul, who art in heaviness through manifold temptations, and ready to faint through the weakness of thy faith. Take courage. Thy salvation is safe. Thy Father, who is in

heaven, rejoices in it; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing. And his joy, too, shall be thine. As sure as God is in Zion, thou shalt return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon thy head; thou shalt obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

Oh what a discovery is here of the ever-loving heart of our heavenly Father! What more could he promise in order to put an end to all strife in the consciences of his afflicted children! He has engaged in a covenant of peace to do good, nothing but good, to them. He has undertaken the whole of the covenant—what was to be done in them, as well as for them—to work out, to apply, and to secure their salvation. It is his unchangeable purpose, not to depart from them, and not to suffer them to depart from him, but he will rejoice in doing them good, and that for ever. This scripture, when understood and applied by the Holy Spirit, is received as full evidence of the unchangeable love of God to his children, and then it quiets their troubled minds. They can believe God to be their God still in an unchangeable covenant, and they become satisfied that he has made them, and will keep them his people for ever. When they can thus mix faith with the promise, it then becomes the means of their resting on the faithful arm of God in the hour of temptation, and of their finding him still a God of peace: whereby peace is established in their consciences, and multiplied in their hearts. They learn to put more trust in him, as their perfectly reconciled Father, and to approach him with more holy filial confidence. The trial of their faith, sharp as it was, yet has done them great good. It has proved their peace, and has confirmed it. They know now well that it is the peace of God; and they have been taught how to maintain it. War makes good soldiers. The trials of their grace are for the improvement of grace. Their peace has been therefore shaken, like a new planted tree, that it may take deeper and faster root. Being thus strengthened in the faith, and having the peace of God ruling in their hearts, they can meditate upon this scripture, and turn it into a subject of prayer and praise.

O gracious God and Father! pardon my thoughts of thy love to me in Jesus. I was tempted, and ready to give way to unbelief; but the gracious provision made in thy word was the means of keeping me in the hour of temptation. O my God! make the word, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust, more precious to my soul. Open still more to me the fulness of it, and put me into happier possession of its promised blessings. I praise thee, I worship thee, for revealing this promise by thy Spirit, and for applying it by his grace with comfort to my heart. I now set to my seal, that it is true. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. Glory be to thee that I accept it, and enjoy the good promised in it! O Father of mercies, what am I that I should be made one of thy people, and should have thee for my God? This love passeth knowledge. Oh help me to understand more, give me to find more, of thy covenant love. Make my heart one with thee. Lead me in thy one way, that I may fear thee for ever. And when temptations come, such as I have been in, grant they may bring me nearer to thee, and may be the means of my making use of what thou hast provided for me in thy Son's fulness. Oh let thy good Spirit abide with me to establish my faith in thine everlasting covenant, that I may believe thou wilt never turn from me to do me good. Merciful God grant me this grace in every hour of need. Thou hast given me thy word for it; and therein thou hast enabled me to put my trust. On thy faithful promise I would depend, and on nothing in myself. Thou hast shown me something of my heart, and I feel it is revolting and ready always to rebel against God; but thou hast undertaken to put thy fear into it, that it shall not depart from thee: therefore into thy faithful hands I commit it. Keep me, my God, by thy mighty power through faith unto salvation. *Amen, Amen.*

Happy trials! which have so good an issue, and bring forth such peaceable fruits. My brethren, account it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, if they lead to the exercise of grace, and occasion fervent, effectual prayer. The believer, thus tried, learns by practice the necessity of being at peace with God, and of maintaining it, in order to walk with God. He is put upon studying the

nature of this peace. He reads and meditates upon the revealed account of it. He sees it is a perfect, unchangeable peace, secured to him by the everlasting covenant of the blessed Trinity, who have engaged to save him from all his sins and miseries, and never to turn away from doing him good. To this he trusts. He commits himself to the care of this covenant God; and he finds the promise true. In temptation he believes, and is delivered. In his warfare, out of weakness he is made strong. He fights the good fight of faith, and he conquers all his enemies. He learns from trials to trust with more confidence. He not only maintains, but improves, peace with God. He depends on what God has promised to them who walk with him, and the promise is made good, and he learns to go on more comfortably, and daily walks closer with his heavenly Father.

The enemy looks on him with malice. He envies his state. He once knew the heaven of communion with God; but he was lifted up with pride, and fell. It stirs up every infernal temper within him to see the happy believer who had fallen, like him, restored to what he can never expect. Hence, either as a sly serpent, or as a roaring lion, he never ceases to tempt. As soon as one wile fails, he has another ready. He is, night and day, plotting and scheming, waiting for an opportunity to make a seasonable attack. While conscience is at peace with God, and lives under the protection of the blood of sprinkling, he tempts in vain: but he does not despair of success. He knows he has an ally within us in fast league with sin, and therefore he still hopes to draw him into sin by surprise or assault; in which he is indefatigable. He is never tired. He is always tempting the believer, not so much to gross offences, as to spiritual wickedness. Sly injections, legal insinuations, and self-righteous thoughts, are his most common temptations. With these he tries to shake the peace of conscience; and he forms his attack generally in this manner:

How can you be a child of God, and yet be as you are? There is nothing in you for which God should look upon you and love you. What have you? What ceasing from evil, what learning to do well, to recommend you to him? How can God love any thing, unless it be agreeable to his will? and what can he delight in, unless it be conformable to his image? But do you live up to his will? and is his image perfectly renewed in you? Have you grace, and do you live up to it? Are you a Christian, and are you like Christ? How are your duties? Just as they should be? You know they are not; and how can God be pleased with them, when you are not pleased with them yourself? How is your walk? Is it such as becometh your high calling—close with God, and at a vast distance from sin, and the world? How is your warfare? Is the whole armour of God kept buckled on? And are you always, in the strength of the Lord, a conqueror? Examine, and try yourself. Bring forth that one good thing for which God should love you and bestow his blessing upon you. You have no such thing. You have nothing to merit, yea, nothing to recommend you to the divine favour: and therefore, is it not great presumption to fancy that God will love such a one as you, whose just desert is wrath and everlasting destruction?

These are some of the depths of Satan. He knows how strongly we are by nature attached to the covenant of works, and that, if he can get the believer to look off from Jesus, expecting to see something in himself, for which God should love him, he shall then weaken his faith and shake his peace. In this snare he has caught many a child of God. The temptation is suitable to the workings of our legal minds: it flatters our self-righteous hopes: and is vastly pleasing to the pride of our carnal hearts. No wonder, then, so long as there is flesh in us as well as spirit, this artful suggestion should be sometimes received in this manner:—Have I any thing for which God should esteem me and bless me? I wish I could discover some amiable temper, or some praiseworthy deed, which might recommend me to the particular regard of God. Indeed, at present I have not any such; but I hope to attain it some time or other. If I do but use more diligence and watchfulness, and wait more constantly in the means of grace, perhaps I may attain it soon. However, there can be no harm in trying. I will exert myself: and I hope the day will come, when I shall be some way deserving of the divine favour.

Here the temptation has taken place. As the serpent beguiled Eve, through

his subtilty, so is this man's mind corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The subtile serpent has attacked the liberty of the child of God and has darkened his understanding, and obscured his view of gospel grace. His eye is not now single: his heart is not now simple, in the finished salvation. He has been deceived into a legal dependence, and is giving way to a spirit of bondage. If he were left to himself, the enemy would lead him captive at his will. Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat; but he is not suffered to blow any thing away, except a little chaff: for the Holy Spirit, in whose keeping he is, discovers and defeats the attempts of Satan. He brings to his mind, and enables him to make use of, what he before knew of the doctrine of grace. The present trial requires the practice, and affords occasion for the improvement of, his former lessons. He had learnt from scripture truths very different from the suggestions to which he was ready to yield. He was therein taught that the Father's love to his children does not suppose merit in them. Grace does not follow works; for then grace would be no more grace. Election is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God, who showeth mercy. For we are saved freely by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. The election of grace is from mere love and sovereign favour, and has no motives to influence it but the good pleasure of the divine will. The objects of it are not the worthy, but the unworthy—not innocent, but fallen man—sinners, as such, no way conditioned or qualified—the lost, the helpless, the ungodly—yea the chief of sinners—open enemies and rebels against God. They are not saved by works of righteousness, which they have done or can do, lest any of them should boast: for boasting is absolutely excluded. Salvation was so contrived, was so wrought out, and is so applied, that he who glorieth shall have nothing left him to glory in but the Lord. No flesh can glory in his presence; for of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

So soon as the spirit of God opens this view of the exceeding riches of divine grace, the believer sees his mistake. He finds that he was departing from the simplicity of the gospel by supposing that the love of God followed merit, and that he should be loved more according as his walk recommended him. His eyes are opened. The delusion vanishes. The perfect freeness and the absolute sovereignty of the Father's love, as revealed in scripture, is manifested to him. He reads, and mixes faith with what he reads, and so recovers himself out of the snare of the devil. Some such passage as this is made the means of his deliverance, Psal. ciii. 17: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." Precious words! full of rich consolation to those who have been tempted to seek some qualifications in themselves, on account of which they might be entitled to the love of God, and who have been distressed upon their not finding it. The holy Spirit teaches such persons to look out of themselves to an object exactly suitable to their case. He directs them to the divine mercy—a never failing spring of comfort—to that mercy which reacheth from eternity to eternity; and which confers its richest favours, not for the worthiness of the receiver, but to the praise of the grace of the giver. Here he would have them fix their eyes, and expect relief to their hearts. Out of the fulness of mercy they may always receive grace for grace; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Every word is weighty. Meditate upon it, O my soul! and may the consideration of each lead thee to exalt that mercy of God which is over all his works.

JEHOVAH is the word here rendered Lord. It is the incommunicable name, expressive of the incommunicable nature of the Godhead. It signifies the peculiar manner of the divine existence, which is in, and of itself, underived, and independent. Oh how happy is it for thee that there is mercy in the self-existent Godhead, and that every perfection in it will be for ever exalted, even justice itself, for the exercise of mercy! May the Holy Spirit teach thee more of its nature, and make thee daily more acquainted in thine experience with its free grace and free gifts!

MERCY is that perfection in Jehovah which disposes him to save miserable sinners; not a blind mercy, such as infidels dream of—but consistent with the

honour of his law, and exercised to the glory of his holy precept and of its just sanctions: therefore mercy and truth are so often mentioned together in scripture. God will not show any mercy to sinners but such as tends to establish his truth. Not one of his words can be broken, nor can one tittle of them ever fail. He will be justified in all his sayings, and clear when he is judged. He will be true and just, whenever he is merciful; his mercies being all covenant-mercies, and all given in and through Christ Jesus. All men are by nature children of wrath, and only they who are chosen and called in Christ Jesus are saved from wrath. These are vessels of mercy. His mercy is to them the love of a tender parent to his miserable children. He pities them, and determines to save them from their sins; in due time he quickens them, gives them eyes to see, and hearts to believe his love to them in Jesus, as the apostle witnesses—"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."

But for what reason, and upon what account, is he merciful to them? His mercy has no motive but his own will. The objects of his mercy are corrupt, fallen creatures, deserving his wrath, even as others; and therefore he does not deal with them upon the footing of desert. If he showed them mercy for any foreseen works of theirs, because he knew they would repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it, mercy would then be turned into justice, and would lose both its name and its nature: whereas he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. It is from mine own freedom and sovereignty that I have mercy on any sinners. The cause is in myself, and not in them. I have compassion on whom I will. It is from mine own mere love that I have determined to be gracious to them; and my love has determined to save them, and the way also in which I will save them. I have appointed the end and the means at the same time. Of mine own motion and good will I have resolved to give my Son for them, and my spirit to them, that they may repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it; and so I may bring them through my tender mercies' to eternal salvation. If this was not the case, how could the description be true, that mercy IS FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING? The mercy of God knows no variableness nor shadow of turning. It is always the same. His fatherly heart has entertained thoughts of mercy towards them: for when he shows them mercy, it is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus—not for their merits, but for his mercies' sake—not for what they have any claim to—but for his own name's sake. He gives all for mercy; and he would have all the glory returned to the mercy of the giver. What he gives, that he continues, and according to covenant engagements. Covenant mercies are sure mercies. "I will make an everlasting covenant for you, says he, even the sure mercies of the beloved." They have already been made sure to him. He is now in full possession of every promised mercy. And he has received them, not as a private person, but as the head of the body, the church. He keeps them for the use of his church members: and, as sure as the crown is upon his head, so surely will it be upon every one of their heads; for they are in the same covenant with him whose sure mercies reach from eternity to eternity. Oh what a view is here open to the eye of faith! Mercy always purposing, and in due time bestowing its free blessings upon sinners—mercy, without beginning, and without ending. The Holy Spirit often calls upon us to behold it in this light; for he has not celebrated any of its divine properties so much as this. It is frequently the noble subject of thanksgiving in the Psalmist's hymns. He has dedicated the 136th entirely to the praise of mercy; and, going through the works of nature, providence, and grace, he ascribes them, one by one, to that mercy which endureth for ever. O happy, thrice happy objects of it! What was in the heart of the Father of mercies towards you from everlasting, will be so to everlasting. His sure mercies are yours. His compassions towards you fail not. Whatever you want for your successful walk he has promised to give you. Be not discouraged then. He will supply all your wants, not for your sakes, but for his mercies' sake. Are you sensible of your unworthiness? That's well. Mercy is for such. It can

have no glory, but from such as you. Trust it, and be assured you will find that it endureth for ever and ever.

If a doubt should arise in your mind—It is true, mercy in God cannot fail, but the exercise of it towards me may fail: I may so walk as to deprive myself of all claim and title to it. The Psalmist has given a direct answer to this ill-grounded suspicion. He says, The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting

UPON THEM THAT FEAR HIM. This is their character; they fear their God. Once there was no fear of God before their eyes; but now they know him to be their Father. The Spirit of adoption has given them joy and peace in believing it. Hence a holy filial fear rules in their hearts, and influences their walk. While it operates thus, and, as obedient children, they fear to offend their loving Father, and desire to please him in all things, what ground have they to suspect that his mercy towards them should fail?

But may they not cease to fear him, and then he will cease to be merciful to them? No; blessed be God! He has made ample provision in this case: "I will put my fear," says he, "into their hearts, and they SHALL NOT depart from me." This fear is one of the fruits of the Spirit which he produces in all the children of God: and they have it from him as a covenant blessing, which is full security for its continuance. It is one of the graces provided for them in Jesus by the Father's immutable love. "I will give them," says he, "one heart, and one way, that they may fear me FOR EVER." The Holy Spirit is the guardian of this never-failing fear. It is his office to put it, and then to keep it, in their hearts. He has the whole charge of it; and therefore he has promised to abide with them for ever, that they may fear the Lord all the days of their lives.

How exactly suited is this scripture to the case of the tempted Christian! What a full provision is there made in it for his safety and peace! God has mercy for him, and plenteous redemption—mercy reaching from everlasting to everlasting—always kind to the miserable. Mercy and misery are related as sin and salvation. There is not any thing, which a sinner can want, but mercy has a supply for him—a promised, a covenant, a never-failing supply. It is a Father's mercy, which will never leave his children, and the same mercy will not suffer them to leave him. His mind is fixed upon showing them mercy for ever and ever: and therefore he gives them his Spirit to abide with them, and to dwell in them. He abides with them, and they live: he dwells in them, and they walk in the fear of God. And by the supply of the Spirit they go on till they finish their course with joy.

By meditating upon this scripture the believer is set at liberty. Though his faith staggered a little, yet the trial of it has done him good. He has learned a useful lesson, and gained much experience by it. His reflections upon what has passed in his mind are such as these:

Oh how foolish was I to forget the atonement and righteousness of my dearest Immanuel, in whom alone I have pardon and acceptance! How base was I, and ungrateful! I was tempted to expect that in myself which I can have only in him. Vile legal creature that I am! I abhor myself for behaving so ill to my best friend. What good can I have, but what I first receive from him? I agree with the apostle, that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I am a very sink of sin and of all uncleanness. I deserve mercy no more than the devil does: and yet I was looking out for some good quality in myself, on account of which God might be merciful to me: whereas I am now satisfied he has no mercy but in Jesus. All his mercies are covenant mercies; given from mere grace, and given to miserable sinners—not to make them self-admirers, but to humble them—not to lead them to think that they can bring God in debt to them for his own gifts, or for the right use of them, which is a fresh gift—but he gives all to the praise of the glory of his grace. He delighteth in mercy; and my case required mercy. It was such as his mercy could get all the honour of relieving. Therefore I ought in the hour of temptation to have trusted in his mercy, to have hoped in his mercy in time of trouble, and to have loved him for his mercy in time of misery. Here should my faith have directed its eye, and not to any good which I have done, or can do. I should have remembered, how

it was with the election of grace, and with the vessels of mercy. God has one way of dealing with them all. Not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to his mercy he saveth them, freely, fully, eternally. All is from his own good will from first to last. Every motive, which inclines him to do good to any sinner, is not excited by what the sinner does or is, but arises from himself. And when he bestows any good, it never is deserved, but is entirely an act of sovereign grace, flowing from the Father's love, out of the Son's fulness, by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and is given and continued to magnify and exalt the mercy of the eternal Three. Oh how did I dishonour the divine perfections by giving way to legal hopes, and by supposing that the divine will would be governed by my more or less deservings? Where should I be, if I had my deservings? God forgive me. I see mine error. I am humbled for it, and I repent with shame and sorrow. I hope my past misconduct will prove a blessing to me: for it has certainly taught me to trust less to myself, and more to the word of God; to depend less upon my own doings, and more upon free grace promises. To the word which cannot be broken, I would trust in time of need. Whoever trusts in it shall never be confounded. This I know to be true by happy experience. I will therefore read, and hear, and study it night and day. By means of it the Lord wrought a great deliverance for me. My feet were almost gone, my treadings had well nigh slipped; but he sent out his word and saved me. I read and believed, that the Father was not reconciled to me for the goodness of my walk, but that reconciliation was planned in the great covenant before all worlds, and was carried into execution by the life and death of Immanuel; it was his peculiar, his glorious, his incommunicable work; it was his sole prerogative to make peace by the blood of his cross. Oh that I may be enabled to maintain it, the next time my faith is tried, and to put honour and glory upon the divine record concerning it! I read and believed, that the Father does not love me upon account of my walk, but for his mercy's sake. His mercy was towards me from everlasting. He loved me in his Son—chose me—accepted me in the beloved—and all his dealings with me, since he called me by his grace, have come from the tender mercies of a covenant God and Father. I would not henceforth have one doubt of his being reconciled to me, and of his loving me perfectly in Jesus. My faith herein has been confirmed by my late trials. I have learned by experience to rely upon what God has spoken, for preserving his peace in my conscience, and his love in my heart. Depending on his faithful word, and mighty arm, I would walk with him this day for the strengthening and increasing of those graces. This is the desire and prayer of my soul.

O Father of mercies, hear me for Jesus' sake! I acknowledge my sinfulness and unworthiness, even in my closest walk with thee. I am less than the least of thy mercies; yea, deserving the heaviest of thy vengeance. It is of the Lord's mercy, that it has not fallen upon me long ago; and I trust in his word, that it will never fall upon me. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage? Thou retainest not thine anger against them for ever; because thou delightest in mercy. Glory be to thee for thine unspeakable mercies: for thou hast given me faith in the atonement of Jesus, by whom I have peace with thee, my reconciled God, and by whom I have experienced thy great love to me. On thee, O my God, is still my hope. I look up to thee, the giver of those graces, for strength to maintain them in my daily walk. I do believe in the sacrifice and righteousness of Immanuel; Lord, help mine unbelief! I find it hard to preserve in my practice, what I believe to be true in doctrine; and therefore on thy present help I must continually depend. Lord, strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man against temptations. I am daily and hourly called upon to exercise my faith; and when thy grace does not hold me up, I fall. The fiery darts of Satan easily inflame me, when they are thrown at my legal hopes, false dependencies, or self righteous tempers. My shield, which should quench them, is ready to drop out of mine hand. I should fall a prey to the enemy and the fire would consume me, if thy mercy was not over me for good. O my God and Father, strengthen my faith against the wiles and assaults of Satan, and against the

workings of mine own unbelief. When these trials come, keep me sensible of my weakness, and dependent on thy promised strength, that I may meet them strong in the Lord and in the power of thy might. Oh let every trial teach me more of thy peace in my conscience, and more of thy love in my heart, that I may keep on in a steady course, walking humbly with my God. This is the work of thy good Spirit. I cannot preserve, nor improve his graces, unless he be every moment present with me. He is the giver, the continuer, the increaser of them all. O God the Holy Ghost, I therefore beseech thee to water thy graces every moment. Lest any hurt them, keep them, keep them night and day. Never leave me, nor forsake me; but what thou hast graciously begun, that mightily carry on, in my soul. Temptations are strong, and I am weak; stand by me in the hour of need. And if my faith be tried with fiery temptations, let it come out of them like gold out of the fire. O thou almighty Spirit, confirm by trials, improve by experience, my trust in thy promised help. Let me go on from faith to faith. Keep up the confidence of my rejoicing in my reconciled God and loving Father, that I may walk humbly with him in sweet communion and holy fellowship in the way everlasting. Grant me these mercies, gracious Father, for thy dear Son's sake, by the influence of the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, to whom be equal praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAPTER V.

The believer orders his steps according to the word, walking with a free heart in the king's highway of obedience.

MEDITATE, O my soul, upon the wonders which divine love hath wrought for thee and for thy salvation. Review the many, many mercies of thy past life; and consider, that thou art called upon to walk this day with THY God. What a privilege is this! He is thy God, and thou art his adopted Son. Oh what a high honour has he conferred upon thee! He has taken thee into the most noble family, yea, into the divine household of faith. He has permitted thee to walk with him as thy Father. He has appointed the way, promised to be with thee in it, and every moment and at every step to be doing thee good. There can be no happiness superior to this on earth. Prize it; for it is inestimable. Enjoy it; for it is heaven begun. Walking with God by faith is present enjoyment of him, and will infallibly bring thee to the end of thy journey, to full and everlasting enjoyment.

Hold fast, then, the confidence of thy rejoicing. What thou hast been taught by the Holy Spirit, depend upon him for confirming and establishing. He has enabled thee to see the glory of the finished salvation of Jesus, and to believe the divine record concerning it. Thou hast renounced every thing for the pardon of thy sins, but the blood-shedding of the Lamb, and every thing for acceptance, but the Lord our righteousness. Thy faith herein has been tried, and the trial ended well. Thy temptations were manifold and violent, but they have done thee good. They have showed thee the necessity of depending upon the perfect work of the God-man—of rejoicing wholly in Christ Jesus, and of having no confidence in the flesh. They have also been the means of convincing thee that thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded then, but fear. And let thy fear of thyself lead thee to trust more in God. Rely on his faithful arm to maintain and to carry on his own work in thy soul. Remember he has promised it. Thy sufficiency is of God, and he has engaged to give thee grace sufficient for thee. He has undertaken, as a Father, to supply all thy wants, to deliver thee from all miseries, and to withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Thy salvation is safe. It rests upon a sure foundation, as sure as the covenant of the day and the covenant of the night. They succeed each other by the will of their Creator, and have not been out of course, not one single moment. The

ordinances of day and night are regular and certain. So certain is thy salvation by the same unerring will. While the belief of this rules in thy conscience and in thy heart, thou wilt be able to resist temptations. None of them will overcome thee, unless they separate between thee and thy God. Nay they will work for thy good, if guilty fears do not wrest the shield of faith out of thine hand. O beg of God to keep thee and thy faith in the hour of trial, that thou mayest experience his faithfulness to his word. If thou put honour upon it, according to thy faith so shall it be done unto thee. Give it credit, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Thou wilt walk in love this day, as God hath loved thee. He will be thy portion, and the way in which he is to be enjoyed will be thy delight.

Set out then in this faith, with peace in thy conscience, and love in thy heart —trusting to thy God and Father. Look up to him, for strength to maintain and to increase these graces, and hope to receive it from his faithfulness. Now he has put a new song in thy mouth, even praise unto thy God, go on thy way believing and rejoicing. Jesus is thine with all his fulness. And he has promised thee a constant supply of the Spirit, that thou mayest have grace for grace to enable thee to walk humbly with thy God.

Mind then, thy walk is to be ordered according to his revealed will, and in his appointed way of obedience to it; for all rational creatures are bound to obey God. As soon as he makes known his will to them, it becomes their indispensable duty. His will is one, like himself, unchangeably the same, yesterday, today, and for ever: for when revealed by the sovereign Creator, it becomes to mankind a law, which altereth not. It binds angels and men every moment, in every point and circumstance. And its obligation will never cease. For all his commandments are sure; they stand fast for ever and ever. What he has commanded is as fixed as the sun before him. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.

It pleased the sovereign Creator to enforce this holy, just, and good law by proper sanctions. Out of his mere grace he has promised life to obedience, which man engaged to perform: and he threatened death to disobedience, to which penalty man submitted. Thereby this law became a covenant of works. The promise was to him, who should continue obedient in all things: for Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who fulfilleth those things shall live by them. But if he does not fulfil them perfectly, without one failing, he then comes under the penalty, which God had threatened to disobedience—"Cursed is he who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." This curse draws after it all the pains and penalties of the broken law in earth and in hell.

Under this law of works Adam was placed, and under it all his descendants are born. He and they are bound to keep the law in their own persons, if they would receive the promise, or liable to suffer the penalty, if they transgress. Adam broke the law of works, and we all in him: for in him all have sinned. We were all in his loins when he fell, and forfeited in his attainder. By the offence of that one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. The righteous judge passed the sentence, and decreed, that by the law of works no flesh living should be saved: for he has proved, in his word, both Jews and Gentiles to be under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of it; whereby every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God: therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

In the law of works there was no provision made for a surety; but it did not absolutely exclude one: therefore it left room for the covenant of grace, in which a provision was made in the person of Jesus Christ for securing the divine honour of this holy law. He undertook to stand up in man's place and stead, to magnify the precepts of the law in his life, and to glorify the penalties of the law in his death, that not one jot or tittle of it might fail till all was fulfilled: and as he was God over all, blessed for ever, his life and death put everlasting honour upon the divine law. His obedience was of inestimable value, and his sufferings were infinitely sufficient to take away sin. Christ is now the end of the

law for righteousness. He answered the end of the law for his people by obeying and suffering for them: and every one of them can now plead by faith a perfect fulfilling of all the precepts, a perfect suffering of all the penalties in the person of their divine surety. God the Father is faithful and just to his word and engagements with his Son: he has made known his will in the immutable record of grace, "that whosoever believeth in Jesus should not perish, but should have everlasting life." How can he perish? Jesus died for him. He shall live with God in everlasting life: because Jesus lived for him. And this is the declared will of the Father concerning all that believe in his only-begotten Son.

Remember then, O my soul, that thou art not under the law, but under grace. Thou art saved from the law, under the form of a covenant of works. Thou art not bound to keep its precepts, in order to have life for thy obedience, nor yet to suffer its penalties for thy disobedience. Thy surety undertook to act and suffer for thee. He was to answer the law in its commands and demands to every jot and tittle. And he did. Whatever it required, whatever it threatened, was perfectly fulfilled in the person of thy God and Saviour: and he has absolutely discharged thee from it, as a law of works. Thou art to have nothing to do with it in that view; nay, he has forbidden thee to keep it, in hopes that thou mayest live thereby. The irreversible decree entered in the records of heaven has enacted —BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED. Thou art now to look upon the law in the matter of justifying and giving life, as a woman looks upon her dead husband. She is freed from the marriage contract with him, and may now give her heart and hand to another: so art thou freed from the bond of the legal covenant. Thou art become dead to the law by the body of Christ, who has espoused and betrothed thee to himself, that, serving him in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter, thou mayest bring forth fruit unto God. This is thy high privilege. Thy first husband is dead: happy for thee, thou art lawfully married to another—thy husband is thy maker; Jehovah of hosts is his name. The word made flesh has paid all thy debts, suffered thy punishment, wrought out a perfect righteousness, and won a crown of perfect glory for thee. Oh what a divine honour has he put upon thee! Thou art now one with Immanuel in a bond of everlasting love. He has given himself to thee, with all he has and all he is; and it is thy happiness now, not to be thine own, but the Lord's—not to follow thine own will, but his. The law of thy Lord is liberty. As taught by his Spirit, and performed by faith, it is perfect freedom. Whilst thou walkest with him with obedience to it, and leanest on thy beloved every step, thou wilt find deliverance from all spiritual tyranny and bondage, and wilt enjoy the light of his countenance, and the love of his heart. When the Son has thus made thee free, thou art free indeed—free now thy heart is set at liberty to run with Jesus in the way of his commandments.

In this view, O my soul, thou canst look with delight at the most holy law. Attend to it closely, and study it carefully. In order to obey, as a Christian, these following considerations should be well understood and digested: because under the influence of them every step of thy walk is to be ordered. Oh pray then for the spirit of wisdom to teach thee practically,

First, that thy walk with God in the way of obedience is not to fulfil the law as a covenant of works. Thou art not required to do this. Thou canst not do it. Immanuel, thy divine surety, took it upon himself. Because it was impossible for thee, a fallen creature, to keep the law, so as to be justified by it, he therefore came in person to fulfil it. He honoured its precepts by his infinite obedience. He magnified its penalties by his inestimable sacrifice. And this is thy justifying righteousness. Through faith in the life and death of the God-man, thou art not only freed from guilt and condemnation, from curse and hell, but art also entitled to life and glory. The law is now on thy side, and is become thy friend. It acquits thee. It justifies thee. It will give thee the reward promised to obedience. The law in the hand of thy Saviour has nothing but blessings to bestow upon thee. Thou art to receive it at his mouth, and to obey him: but not from any legal hopes of heaven, or from any slavish fears of hell; for then thou wouldst come under the covenant of works again. Whereas thou art not under the law, but under grace; mind thy privilege, and pray for grace

to live up to it. Thou art not under the law, bound to keep it perfectly in thine own person, or, in case of failing, condemned by it, and under its fearful curse; but thou art under grace, a state of grace, through faith in the obedience and sufferings of thy blessed surety, and under the power of grace, sweetly inclining thee to love, and mightily enabling thee to keep the law of the Lord thy God. Live thus by grace, and sin shall not have dominion over thee. Under the reign of grace, the tyrant sin is always dethroned. Obey under grace, as freely and fully saved by faith in Jesus, and this will make thy walk easy and evangelical: thou wilt go on with a free spirit, and wilt delight thyself in the ways of God, walking with him,

2. By faith, and not by sight. This is the great spring of all gospel obedience. Faith has an universal efficacy: for thus it is written—"Without faith it is impossible to please God." He is not pleased with the thing done, but with the principle on which it is done. He looks at the heart. Hearing the word, or saying prayers, or giving alms, or doing any thing commanded, are not pleasing in themselves; but they must be performed upon a right motive, and to a right end. And both these come from faith. The apostle mentions the motive which had influenced every step of his Christian course: "We walk by faith, and not by sight"—we judge of our state by what God says of it, and we order our walk accordingly. We give credit to his witness of our being pardoned and justified freely by grace through faith; and we depend for the truth of this not on what we see, but on what we believe. We trust not on our good frames, or warm feelings, or sensible comforts, or to any of the genuine fruits and effects of faith, but we trust what God says simply, as his record: and therefore we walk in a constant dependence on the truth of God in his word, and upon the faithfulness of God to his word. Some promised grace we stand in need of at every step; and we rely upon his word, which cannot be broken, and upon his faithfulness, which cannot fail. Thus we go on, and we find the promise made good, according to our faith.

Such was the apostle's walk. And is thine directed by the same motive? Search, O my soul, and examine upon what principle thou goest to duty. Is it in the obedience of faith? Dost thou take no step without the warrant of the word of God? Dost thou give full credit to what God says in it of thy state, as a justified person? And does this appear from thy dependence upon his faithfulness to make good every thing promised to them who are in that state? Blessed art thou of the Lord, if thou art walking by this faith. Oh praise his holy name, who has thus highly favoured thee, and ascribe to him all the glory. So will thy end be right, as well as thy motive. True faith takes no honour to itself. It is an emptying, humbling grace. Its spring-head is in covenant love, and it is given from distinguishing favour and sovereign mercy. It has no foundation, when given, but the word of God: nothing to rest on, but the divine truth: no support, but the divine power: and no growth but from the divine influence. What, then, does it leave a man to glory in? Whoever has it, has it all from God; and while he is in his right mind, living by it, he will be disposed to give God all the glory of it: even for common mercies, as well as spiritual, he will live by the faith of the Son of God. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. And thus will he go on sweetly and happily, obeying, not from slavish fears or legal hopes, but

3. From holy love, which is the fruit and consequence of walking by faith. Faith worketh love, and then worketh by love. The faith of the gospel, as a grace of the Spirit, worketh chiefly by love to God, and to man for God's sake: for the gospel discovers the way of salvation, contrived by the eternal Three, fulfilled in the life and death of Immanuel, and applied to the sinner's heart by the eternal Spirit. Whoever is enabled to believe the gospel, will see himself an object of the covenant love of the blessed Trinity, and will therefore love Father, Son, and Spirit: for we love him, says the apostle, because he first loved us. And faith in his love to us will make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful. Love is very active. Obeying from love is very sweet. How active, how sweet is obedience, when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart

by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us! He is an almighty agent. He overcomes the power of legal, unbelieving workings, and puts a new spring to duty into the heart. He manifests the love of God in Christ, his free distinguishing love, the exceeding riches of it, and the numerous blessings flowing from it through time and eternity. In the sense of these mercies he excites gratitude, and puts it upon acting. This grace has a wonderful influence. "What return shall I make unto the Lord?" is the devout breathing of the grateful heart. While the love of Christ constraineth it, all the affections follow him, and the soul delights itself in his ways. Then none of his commandments will be grievous. Nay, his yoke itself becomes easy, and his burden light: O triumphant love! How active, how sweet did he find it, who cried out—"I can do ALL things, I can suffer all things, I am more than conqueror, through him that loveth me."

And is not this, O my soul, thy happy case? Oh prize thy privilege, and adorn it in thy love. Walk in love with thy reconciled God, and out of love to him perform all duties, and bear all crosses. Remember, thou art not required to obey, in order to be saved for thine obedience, but thou art already saved; and therefore, out of gratitude to thy dearest Saviour, thou art bound to love him and to obey him. Thou canst not love his person, and yet hate his will. "If ye love me," says he, "keep my commandments"—give this proof of it, keep in my way, doing my commandments. But whatever ye do, let it come from the heart. Obey me; but see it be with a willing mind, and with a free spirit. When all springs from love, then my service will be perfect freedom. I would have you to do my will, but without fear; not for life, but from life; not that ye may live, but because ye live. Do it as sons, and not as slaves: the slave abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth for ever. In this free spirit of adoption serve me, as sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with me. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith I have made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

To obey from life, and salvation received and enjoyed, is sweet liberty. To obey, as the condition of life and salvation, is bitter slavery: it is an intolerable yoke, because it is not possible any fallen man should so keep the law as to live thereby. But the believer, freed from this condition by Christ's keeping the law for him, is in liberty; he is saved from the penalty annexed to the transgression; he is entitled to the life promised to obedience, and thereby he is delivered from legal hopes, and from guilty fears. In this faith he walks on delightfully in the ways of obedience: for he is reconciled to the law through the grace that is in Christ Jesus: he loves it. Oh what love, says he, have I unto thy law! because now I find it, according to promise, written upon my heart. And this is a

4. Motive to gospel obedience. The new covenant runs thus: "I will put," says God, "my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them." The heart is by nature as hard as adamant. It is enmity itself against the holy law. But the Lord here engages to take away the stony heart, and to give a heart of flesh, upon which he will write the ten commandments; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart. The Spirit of the living God will teach all his children to know their Father; he will manifest to them their adoption; he will reveal to them their Father's love in Jesus; and he will make their hearts happy in the enjoyment of it. Then the holy fruits of this love will appear towards man. It will work sweetly in benevolence, and effectually in beneficence. The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the selfish, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous. When the Holy Spirit teaches brotherly love, he overcomes all opposition to it. He says to his disciples, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." And he makes them kind to one another: they show it by every good word and work. Thus by manifesting to them the Father reconciled in Jesus, and by enabling them to love man for his sake, he writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, on which hang all the law

and the prophets. The love of God, says the apostle to the Romans, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; and to the Thessalonians, Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. Thus he engages the affections of the soul to the holy law, and inclines the inner man to love obedience. It ceaseth to be a yoke and a burden. How easy is it to do what one loves! If you dearly love any person, what a pleasure is it to serve him! What will not love put you upon doing or suffering to oblige him! Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleasantness. The soul will run, yea, inspired by love, it will mount up with wings as eagles, in the way of God's commandments.

Happy are the people that are in such a case! And is it not, O my soul, in some measure thine? Hast thou not been taught to love God and his ways? Since thou hast been acquainted with him as thy loving Father in Jesus, has not thy faith been working by love to him, and to his will, and to his whole household and family? Remember this is promised. All the children of God are to be taught to know and to love their heavenly Father. This is the very tenor of the covenant of grace, which the almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil. And he cannot fail in his office. It is his crown and glory to make good his covenant engagements. Oh trust him then, and put honour upon his faithfulness. He has promised to guide thee with his counsel, and to strengthen thee with his might in the way of obedience to thy reconciled God. What is within thee, or without thee, to oppose thy walking in love with him, he will incline thee to resist, and he will enable thee to overcome. Oh what mayst thou not expect from such a divine friend, who is to abide with thee on purpose to keep thy heart right with God? What can he not do, what will he not do, for thee? Such as is the love of the Father and of the Son, such is the love of the Holy Ghost, the same free, perfect, everlasting love. Read his promises of it. Meditate on them. Pray to him for increasing faith to mix with them; that, he dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayst have fellowship there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through the Son's atonement, pray the Holy Spirit to subdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever grace is to be received out of the fulness of Jesus in order to keep up and to promote that communion, intreat the Holy Spirit to give it thee with growing strength. But pray in faith, nothing wavering. So shall the love of God rule in thy heart. And then thou shalt be like the sun, when it goeth forth in its might, shining clearer and clearer to the perfect day. Oh may thy course be like his, as free, as regular, as communicative of good, that thy daily petition may be answered, and that the will of thy Father may be done in earth, as it is done in heaven.

When all these things concur, what can be wanting to make the way of obedience easy and pleasant? It is not now a hard burden, impossible to be borne. The Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, hath made it easy. He has reconciled the believer to the law; for he shows it to him in his surety, magnified and made honourable—magnified infinitely in his life—made everlastingly honourable in his death: so that the Father can get the fullest glory to every divine perfection, even to his justice, by saving sinners through faith in the righteousness of his Son: he can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. The believer, persuaded of this, is reconciled to God. Being no longer under the law as a covenant of works, but under grace, he loves the law, and walks with God in sweet obedience to it. He sets out, and goes on every step, in faith—trusting to the acceptance of his person, and of his services in the beloved. He does not work now in order to be saved; but he works because he is saved. And he ascribes all he does to the praise of the glory of free grace. He works from gratitude, and the faith of God's elect always does. It never fails to show itself by love. The Holy Spirit wins the heart by revealing to it the love of God, and thereby draws out the affections after him. When the commandment comes, "My son, give me thy heart;" the son is ready, "Lord, take it, and seal it thine for ever." And whatever inbred enmity may remain against giving it to the Lord, the Holy Spirit has undertaken to subdue it. It is his office to take away the stony heart, and to create a heart of flesh, soft and willing to receive the im-

pression of this grace. With the same finger which once wrote the holy law upon tables of stone, it is now written upon the fleshly tables of the heart. And then the love of God and the love of man are clearly taught, and effectually enforced. What a change does this make in obedience! Hard things are now done with ease. Rough ways are made smooth. Painful things become delightful. The labour of love is sweet labour, because the heart is in it. The feet run, the hands work, all the faculties are ready to exert themselves, when love commands.

O my God, let it be thus with me. Thou hast given me an earnest desire to walk with thee in thy ways; guide me in them by thine almighty Spirit. Let him abide with me, Holy Father, as the Spirit of adoption, that I may always serve thee as thy reconciled child, not under the law, but under grace. I would gladly walk with thee every step by faith, and that faith working by love to thee and to my whole will. O God, give me grace sufficient for thy holy walk. Let thy faithful promise be daily fulfilled: write thy law still plainer in mine inward parts, and let it be more fairly copied out in my life. I want to love thee more, as thou knowest. O my God, keep my heart sensible of the exceeding riches of thy love to me, and let the growing sense of this increase mine to thee. In the strength of thy good Spirit enable me to overcome inward and outward opposition to my walking with thee in love. Let him strengthen me mightily in the inner man for every labour of love. From him cometh power to embrace and to cleave with full purpose of heart unto the ways of God—to love what he loves—and to hate what he hates. O thou blessed Spirit of the Father and of the Son, make me willing, keep me able to enjoy the Father's love in his Son; and let it be a growing love, abounding yet more and more in knowledge, and in all sensible feeling, that I may run and not be weary, may be going on to the end, and not be faint. Even so let it be done unto thy servant, according to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Let me have fellowship with the Father in his love, through the salvation of his Son, by thine influence upon my heart, now, henceforth, and for ever. *Amen.*

CHAPTER VI.

The walk of the believer in the way of duty.

It is very hard to go on in a straight course, and for any length of time. The hindrances are many. To understand the nature and obligations of duty, to enter upon it with right motives, to perform it in a proper temper, to go through it without backwardness or weariness, not by constraint, but willingly, and to find the true end of doing it answered; these are great difficulties, but they will be removed in some measure out of the believer's walk, if he attend to what was said before of obedience in general, and if he be enabled to bring it into practice.

It cannot be too often repeated, that the true believer is not under the law as a covenant of works—bound to keep the precept for life, or liable to the penalty of death. He is not under the law in this respect, but under grace. He is one with Christ, who kept the precept, and suffered the penalty for him, as his surety, and in his stead. He has put in his plea, and taken the benefit of Christ's suretyship. His plea has been admitted; and therefore he is in a state of perfect acceptance. He stands in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free. Grace reigns in him, and over him, and renders his obedience perfect freedom. He obeys; but it is all in faith. He works; but it is from a sense of the Father's love to him in his Son. Gratitude taught by the Holy Spirit influences his heart and life. His heart has the love of God written upon it, and his life manifests it. He serves God with a thankful mind, and without fear, and cheerfully does all the good he can to man for God's sake.

The believer will never get on in the way of duty, unless he learns to obey upon these gospel principles. He will stand in need of their assistance at every step: for he will meet with constant opposition to them. The flesh will not

come under grace. The carnal mind is always legal. The old man of sin knows nothing but working for life, and will not submit to any other way. Our sinful nature is altogether for the covenant of works: Jews, Turks, heathens, and nominal Christians, are all upon one plan: they expect God will be merciful to them for their doings. And the children of God are exercised with this self-righteous spirit, more or less, all their days. Is it not, O my soul, thy grief and burthen? Art thou not daily plagued with it in thy duties? And though thy principles be very evangelical, yet they too often fail thee in practice. Oh beg of God then, earnestly and often, that thou mayst be cast into the mould of the gospel, quite evangelized in thy mind, and mayst perform all duties upon such motives as he himself requires and approves.

Duty is a debt owing to God—due from the creature to the Creator. The obligation to it arises from the absolute dependence of the one upon the other: and it consists in acknowledging this in the appointed way by a perfect and continual service of every faculty—the creature being entirely subject to the will of the Creator, and living in a never-failing conformity to it: for the will of God doth bind all men on earth, and angels and glorified spirits in heaven. It is an unchangeable law, obliging for ever all creatures to obedience, not only on account of the matter contained in it, but also with respect to the sovereign authority of the almighty lawgiver. And this obligation Christ in the gospel has not in the least dissolved, but on all occasions has confirmed and strengthened. How decisive are these words! "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil:" to fulfil the law in mine own person, as the surety for my people, and to put the love of it into their hearts, and to engage them and to enable them to practise it in their lives; though not for the same end for which I fulfilled it.

Duty is always one and the same—a debt always due to God. But the debt of obedience being withheld, and the death of suffering being incurred, the believer is taught to plead his discharge for suffering under Christ, and his fulfilling of obedience in the righteousness of Christ. With this faith he has a delightful prospect of duty. God is now at peace with him. God loves him in his Son. It is his high privilege to enjoy the sense of those distinguishing favours. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God. What an honour is this! Having received the adoption of sons, he is blessed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowship with him. What a happiness is this? "Son, all that I have is thine: it is freely given to thee in Jesus, and thou art now called upon to enjoy me and mine in thy holy walk." Here duty becomes his privilege. It is exalted and spiritualized into a gospel grace. He is bound to it, but it is by the cords of love. The pleasing bonds of gratitude tie his heart to obedience, to a free, holy, evangelical obedience. He obeys, not as a slave, but as a son—not for fear, but because Christ has set him at liberty—not that God may accept, pardon, and justify him, but because God has done all for him, and will do all in him—not that he may have heaven for his obedience, but because heaven is reserved for him, and he for it. He therefore looks at duty, as greatly refined by the gospel. Every act of it, done in faith, is an act of fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit every act brings the Father's love through the Son's salvation into experience. He has communion with his God in all he does. This ennobles duty. It is hereby raised to a divine honour: for it is hereby made, to them who are in Christ, the highest privilege they can have on this side of heaven.

When the Holy Spirit writes the law upon the heart, he then teaches this obedience of faith. He does not abolish duty, but he enforces it upon right motives, and directs it to a right end. The same duties remain in the gospel, but not upon the same obligation. Law duties, as conditions of life, cannot be fulfilled. The judge himself has decreed that by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: therefore the law as a covenant of works does not enter into the believer's obedience. He obeys, because he is freed from this covenant—not freed from doing the same duties which this covenant required, but freed from doing them upon law motives, neither expecting the promised life on account of keeping the precepts, nor fearing the threatened penalty on account of not

keeping them. It is his privilege to obey, because he is saved. He works from a free spirit, and with a thankful heart. He does all his duties in faith. He is spiritual in them, acting upon the endearing motive of God's love to him in Christ, as it has been revealed to his heart by the Holy Spirit. He hopes for the acceptance of them only through the intercession of Christ: and, after he has done them ever so well, he desires grace from Christ, to return him all his glory. Thus in every duty he aims at fellowship with God in Christ through the Spirit, and seeks to present an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

Whatever thou art required to do, remember, O my soul, that thou art under grace, and it is thy privilege to do it in faith. View the two tables in the hand of thy Saviour, and receive the ten commandments from his mouth. Happy for thee, Jesus is thy lawgiver. His spirit will gospelize thine obedience. He will bring thine heart into it. He will set thee in the chariot of love, and thou shalt ride on prosperously. He will oil the wheels of duty, and they shall run easy and pleasant. Thou shalt be carried sweetly through duty, thy Beloved being present and conversing with thee in it: yea thy faith, working by love to him, will render fellowship with God, in all thou doest, the joy of thy heart and the glory of thy life.

Oh beg of thy divine Teacher thus to spiritualize thine obedience! From him only canst thou learn the two great commandments, which are the sum and substance of the will of thy God. In the first, his nature is revealed, and then his worship. He is the Lord thy God, Jehovah thy Alehim. Jehovah means the self-existent Godhead, and Alehim, the persons in covenant, Father, Son, and Spirit, partakers of the same self-existence, and divine glory, without any difference or inequality. There can be no true religion without the true object of worship; and he cannot be worshipped unless he be known: therefore it is an indispensable duty to know the Lord God. But how shall fallen man attain to this knowledge? He lost it by sin, and he cannot, by any reasoning faculty or power of his own, recover it. It is a matter of fact, that no man did ever by searching find out God; and attested by infallible authority, that the world by its wisdom knew not God. There is no true description of the Godhead but what is revealed in scripture; and it is altogether from the teaching of the Holy Spirit that any one savingly understands what is revealed. He, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, opens the eyes of the mind, sets the object before them, and gives a clear idea of it. He takes of the things of God, and shows them to his disciples. He does not lead them into abstracted reasonings about the divine nature, or what the absolute Godhead is; but his lessons are useful and practical. He teaches the knowledge of the persons in Jehovah as they are related to sinners in the covenant of grace. Through him the Father is made known: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father," Rom. viii. 15. Through him the Son is believed in: for no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. He discovers the Father's love in the Son with its rich graces and abundant blessings, as it is written: "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." He makes known the Giver, and the gifts; and he is received for that very purpose. He shines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. And this is saving acquaintance with the Father and with the Son; for hereby the understanding is restored to the image of God, and the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

Oh what a mercy is this! What can call for greater praise? And this mercy, O my soul, is thine. Unspeakably gracious has the Lord been to thee. He has given thee the knowledge of himself. His image is upon thine understanding. His light is shining upon it. Certainly, it is as great an act as when he first commanded the light to shine out of darkness: for hereby I believe in him, I know him to be my FATHER. Oh precious name! The love of his heart, and it is infinite; the blessings of his love, and they are numberless; he has called me to enjoy, freely, of mere grace, of his own sovereign good will—called me to the adoption of sons, to the noblest dignity, yea to everlasting honour, to be a

son of the most high God—God is my Father—my new birth is from him—that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and has fellowship with the Father of spirits. Behold what manner of love this is! No parent ever loved or can love a child as my Father which is in heaven loves me. And I desire in the sense of this to love him, to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, and gratefully to devote all I have and am to his service and to his glory. O thou divine Revealer of this love, enlighten mine understanding and influence my affections, that I may grow in the knowledge of my Father in Jesus! for

In him the Father only is to be known. He is his Father, as our covenant head, and therefore ours in him. God is not a Father to any, but in Christ. The name Father respects Christ, as the first-begotten, and then all his seed. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, and depends for its adoption on the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ. He undertook to be made man, to live, and to die for the many sons whom he was to bring to glory: and in consequence of his undertakings it pleased the Father to lay up all fulness of grace for them in the God-man, their covenant head. And it pleases the Spirit to witness of this fulness, and to enable believers to receive out of it grace for grace. Thus he reveals Immanuel to them. They know him, and are one with him. He is their Lord and their God, and by faith they live in him and upon him. Trusting to his atonement and righteousness, they have peace with their reconciled Father, and they enjoy his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Waiting in the appointed ways, they grow in the knowledge of the wonderful person God-Jesus. They see more of the divine glory of his salvation work, and by depending on it daily they enjoy more of the things which accompany salvation. Thrice happy are they whose acquaintance with Jesus is thus increasing. Their happiness has a boundless subject. They may study on, and they will find in him new worlds of delights to all eternity. O ye highly favoured! read and adore the wonders already wrought for you; among which these are not the least: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life." Blessed knowledge! they have an understanding given them, and they are savingly acquainted with the Father and with the Son by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Jehovah is their Aleim. Thus they learn the first part of their duty, which leads them to the

Second; namely, to love the persons in the Godhead, because they stand in this most endearing relation to them. They love the Father, who is their Father in Jesus. They have not only heard of and believed in, but have also enjoyed, his precious love. It has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, who has overcome all resistance to his love; yea, has made enmity itself yield to it. Having purified the conscience by faith, he then purifies the heart: he pours into it a sense of that love which gave his coequal Son for them, and all the blessings in earth and in heaven with him. Thereby he draws out the affections in holy desires to be more united to the Father of mercies. It is the property of love to desire to be united to the beloved object. The Holy Spirit has discovered the object, and has given the desire; and he fulfils all the desires of his own creating. He teaches all the children of God to know their Father, and to experience his love to them in his Son; and then they cannot but love him. He creates the new heart for this very purpose, and makes it sensible that the Father's love is all received through the Son; and therefore the Father and the Son are beloved with an undivided affection.

The Son is his office-name. It should never be heard without putting us in mind of the wonderful love of our God in his undertakings. He covenanted to be made flesh. What a miracle of love is that! He engaged with his Father to be the surety for his people, to do their work, to suffer their punishment; and then God and man, one Christ for ever, was to have all fulness of covenant blessings to give his people. The Father has no love, the Spirit bestows no grace, but what comes through Christ. A believer is therefore taught in every thing he does to have fellowship with Christ. His safety, his happiness, his hopes of happiness to-day and for ever, are blessings to be received out of Immanuel's

fulness: for he is the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all: and while the member is receiving life and sense and happiness from the fulness of the head, he will have fresh motives to love his divine Saviour. What can fix his affections, if gratitude to Jesus cannot? He has every thing in him that can win the heart. He has beauty to engage love, blessings to increase love, glories to increase love to him for evermore. He is beauty without a rival. Whatever is charming in any earthly object is but a ray from him, and should lead to him; it is but a beam to point out the matchless graces of Immanuel. And so is the loveliness of heavenly objects: saints and angels have nothing beautiful but what the love of Jesus has put upon them. He is the Lord and Giver of all their glory. How glorious then must he be! He is mine, says the believer, and my property in him makes him indeed glorious in mine eyes. Once I saw no beauty in him, that I should desire him; but now he is my beloved and my friend. I can see every thing truly lovely in my Lord and my God. Whatever else courts my heart, appears to be but a shadow: the substance is my Jesus. He endears himself daily to me by his numberless favours. I am always receiving out of his fulness some blessing, which makes him the centre of my happiness. Every look of faith discovers in him some new excellency, and brings from him some fresh kindness, and thereby engages my heart still more to its precious Saviour. And when I look forward to the glory to be revealed, when I shall see my dearest Jesus face to face, and shall be like him, and shall enjoy him, and in him all the blessings of the eternal Three for ever, oh! this is too big for present thought; yet it constrains me to give up my whole soul to this heavenly lover. Glorify him daily in me, thou faithful witness for Jesus, and give me continual reason to love thee with the same undivided affection wherewith thou hast enabled me to love the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is Jehovah, a person in the self-existent Godhead, equal with the Father in every attribute. His office-name is *Spirit;* the idea is taken from air, such as we breathe, to denote his being the breather or inspirer of spiritual life. Every thing done by him in this character tends to holiness, and therefore he is called the *Holy* Spirit. His office in the covenant, as well as his coequality with the Father and the Son, entitle him to equal worship, and to equal love: for he undertook to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love in Jesus. Their fulfilment depends entirely upon his grace. The Son has been incarnate: he has brought in everlasting righteousness, and made the atonement of sin: the Father is satisfied with his finished work, and has demonstrated his acceptance of it: the God-man is now upon the throne of glory, with all power in heaven and earth. To this the Holy Spirit bears witness. It is his divine office to apply the salvation of Jesus, and to make it effectual. He does all *in* the heirs of promise. The Father gave them to the Son; the Son redeemed them; but they are in the common mass of corruption, dead in trespasses and sins, till the Spirit of life enter into them. They feel not their guilt nor their danger till he convince them. They are quite ignorant of God and of the things of God till he make them wise unto salvation. They cannot believe in Jesus till the Spirit of faith enable them. They cannot rejoice in the Father's love till the Comforter makes them sensible of it. They are without strength until they be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. They cannot go in their Christian course but by a constant supply of the Spirit. They cannot hold out to the end but from his abiding with them for ever. So that he is the Lord and giver of life. He begins the good work, and he confirms it, until the day of Jesus Christ. Every motion of spiritual life is from him; and all those whom he makes alive, he makes sensible of the debt which they owe him. He manifests his love to them, and thereby he engages their love to him. They experience how great the love of the Spirit is. They are sensible of their obligations to him, and desire to be thankful for them. Thus their affections return to the proper object of love and worship. They receive daily the blessings of the Father's love, through faith in the Son's salvation, by the applying power of the Holy Spirit; and hereby they are reconciled to the first and great commandment: it is become the delight of their souls to love the Lord God.

Here consider, O my soul, whether thou art acting upon the principle of gratitude to the good God. If thou art, then his yoke will be easy and his burden light. Thou wilt not go to duty in bondage, hoping to gain his love by the desert of what thou doest, or fearing to be beaten with many stripes for not doing it well. Thy God, whom thou servest, is thy most loving friend and tenderest father. He loved thee in Jesus freely by grace, not by works done by thee, or to be done. Immanuel is thy Saviour: his love to thee is made up of miracles. No understanding of angels or of glorified spirits can conceive how great it is: for it passeth knowledge. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit has revealed it unto thee. He loves thee, as the Father and the Son do, with the same divine affection. Thy debt is equal; thy gratitude should be the same to the blessed Trinity. In the sense of thine infinite obligations, thou art called upon to walk in the way of duty. Love to the person whom thou art to serve will make service pleasant. And thou dost love thy God. He has given himself with every covenant blessing to be thine; and these blessings are to be enjoyed in thy walk with him. With this faith look at duty. It is the expression of gratitude to thy dearest friend, and it is the way to enjoy his divine friendship. He requires it out of love to thee, and would have thee to do it out of love to him. Oh how exalted his duty, when communion with God is carried on by it! He would have thee keep close to him, in order to maintain a sense of his gracious presence in thy heart, and so to walk with him as to have his love to thee confirmed at every step; and therefore thou shouldst seek to preserve a constant nearness and holy fellowship with him in every thing thou doest. This is the will of thy God. May it be thine, O my soul! Study this glorious way of gospel duty. Pray to be taught it better, and to go on in it more spiritually every day. Bring it into all thy affairs. In thy calling, as well as in the means of grace; in temporal, as well as in heavenly matters; set the Lord always before thee; and so live and act in every thing as to keep up communion with thy God and Father in Jesus, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

When God is thus become the dear object of thy happy heart, then every way wherein his love is to be enjoyed will become delightful. The time, the place, the means of meeting with him, will be greatly desired and much longed for. Thy heart cannot but be where thy treasure is. Thou wilt want no spur to duty, no whip to drive thee to ordinances. It will be enough that the Lord is there. As when he said to David, Seek ye my face; his heart replied, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. His heart said it. His affections were set upon God, and he was ready to seek wherever God was to be found. No hunted hart ever panted more after the water-brooks than his soul did after God. His hope in doing any thing was to have God's gracious presence with him. And his happiness in it was to have communion with God. This is gospel duty. And what a glorious privilege is it! Oh that it may be my happy experience thus to meet God in all his ways, and to enjoy him in my daily walk. That thou mayst grow in this divine fellowship, consider, O my soul, some of the duties of the first table, and learn to practise them upon gospel principles. The first and chief is PRAYER, which consists in keeping up daily converse with thy God upon all occasions. This is the breathing of the new-born soul. It wants to draw the air of heaven, and to live in its own proper element. There is a way opened for it unto the throne of glory, and the children of God may approach it with boldness; for it is a throne of grace, and he that sitteth upon it loves to hear and to answer their petitions. He is *their* Father. "I go, says Jesus, to my Father and to your Father; my Father himself loveth you: ask what ye will of him in my name he will do it." This is the beloved object of prayer—a reconciled Father in Jesus—whose heart is full of tenderness to the complaints and miseries of his family—his promises are the declarations of his pure love—a dependence upon his fulfilling them does honour to his truth and faithfulness, and always brings down the blessing. The Holy Spirit abides with the children of God to teach them thus to pray in faith. He helps their infirmities in prayer, strengthens their graces, and bestows on them their comforts. He enables them to come with boldness, and have access with confidence. Whatever their Father has freely promised to give them in Jesus, they can ask in faith, nothing wavering; for

they know his promises cannot fail: they find them daily fulfilled, whereby their holy familiarity with their Father increases. He draws nearer to them, and they draw nearer to him. This their mutual intercourse may be interrupted, but it cannot be entirely broken off. God is always disposed to hear, although the believer be not always able to pray rejoicing. It is still his privilege, although he may not find any great delight in it; but if he continue to make constant use of his privilege, his delight will return, and God will fulfil to him the gracious promise—I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Thus the child of God learns to love prayer, yea, to pray without ceasing. He lives under his Father's eye, and in a dependence on his Father's care for him night and day. And he has hereby as true and lasting fellowship with the things of God in his soul as he has with the things of this world in his body.

Oh what an exalted privilege is this! How highly is prayer hereby ennobled! It is not a law duty to an absolute God; but a gracious intercourse with a covenant God: not practised that he may love us, but because he loves us; not to make us his children, but because we are his children. It should be performed always in this faith. If there be infirmities in it, such as wandering, coldness, or the like, we are to remember that we are not heard for the goodness of our prayers, nor answered for the fervency of them. That which makes our persons accepted, obtains acceptance for our services also. We, and all we do, are only accepted in the beloved: "For through Jesus Christ we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father," Ephes. ii. 18; our access is through Jesus Christ. Trusting to his finished salvation, we enter into the presence of the Father, and, guided by the Holy Spirit, we pray in faith. Whatever we ask in the Son's name, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him. This spiritualizes prayer, and puts glory upon it, because there is heavenly fellowship with God in it, with the Father through the Son, by the one Spirit.

These are some of the privileges of Christian prayer. Thou goest, O my soul, to meet thy God in it—to converse with thy Father—to call on him for the fulfilling of his promises made in Jesus—to wait on him for his answers—and to give him his glory. Oh what blessed seasons hast thou enjoyed in this communion with thy God! How has he manifested his nearness to thee, and bounty towards thee! Hast thou not found his heart open, his ears open, and his hands open, to grant thee the request of thy lips? And when thou hast not found such sweet fellowship with thy God in prayer, yet thy dependence on his faithful word has been exercised and improved. Thou hast left thy petitions with thy friend and advocate, trusting to that most glorious description of him in Rev. viii. 3, 4: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." O thou great Angel of the covenant, thus present my prayers! They are nothing worth, but as perfumed with thy divine odours. Let them ever ascend before God out of thy hand with the smoke of the incense of thy sacrifice and intercession. Blessed Spirit of prayer, increase my faith, that I may trust more to a prayer-hearing God and Father, who is always ready to grant every good thing promised to his children in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

Praise and prayer go together. The prayer of faith will afford continual matter for praise. The one is a dependence on God for every promised blessing; the other is the acknowledgement of his having bestowed it. Innocent man had his heart in this sweet work. It was his happiness. Every breath in paradise was praise. The redeemed man has more reason. His obligations are far greater than Adam was under to his God—raised from his fall—saved from the guilt and misery of it—chosen and called to this salvation by mere grace—through faith a partaker of it—an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. Oh what motives are these, to continual thankfulness! And these motives are effectual when the Holy Spirit discovers the things that are freely given to us of God. He makes us sensible of them and thankful for them; for he preserves in the soul a blessed poverty of spirit, an humble, abiding sense of wants and unworthiness; and thus he lays a sure foundation for thankfulness Every blessing is then re-

ceived with a—Why me? what am I, and what is my Father's house, that God should deal thus bountifully with me? I must refer it all to the praise of the glory of his own grace. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. All these blessings flow from the Father's love in his Son; and the Holy Spirit has discovered to me that boundless ocean of love, and has often refreshed me with its life-giving streams. He has made known to me the good pleasure of the Father's will, which he had purposed in himself, to choose me by his distinguishing grace to be one of his children; and through faith in Jesus Christ I read my adoption, and take possession of the inheritance of children. Mine experience of these blessings cannot be questioned, while I am receiving out of the fulness of Jesus grace for grace. Oh how great is my debt! It is equal to the eternal Three: so should my gratitude be. It is very meet, right, and my bounden duty that I should, at all times and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God; therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of hosts: heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

May such as this, O my soul, be thy daily tribute of thanks! Consider what thou owest to thy God; how great are his favours, how many, how endless; and bestowed on the most unworthy. Review his goodness in giving thee being, and in preserving it. Remember from how many dangers and pains he has delivered thee: what health and creature-comforts he has vouchsafed of his mere bounty; and what a monument of his long suffering thou art. Oh what a miracle that one like thee should be out of hell! Then put to the account spiritual favours, what blessing thou hast received from the Father's love in Jesus; what blessings thou art entitled to in him, not only in time, but also in eternity. Cast up the mighty sum, and say, How much it is. Canst thou tell the numbers thereof? No. It is beyond the power of the greatest arithmetician. If thou couldst write a figure upon every atom in the creation, thou wouldst want a new world whereon to sum up the vast account; for thy mercies reach to the heaven of heavens, and they are also everlasting. Then consider to whom thou art thus indebted. Is it not to a justly offended God, who might have glorified all his perfections in punishing thee for thy sins? Whereas in wonderful grace he has chosen and called thee to the adoption of sons. He is thy Father. This is the spring of all thy mercies. In love he gave his Son to finish thy salvation. And his spirit has brought thee to believe in it, and to enjoy it. This is the source of all thy praise. The object of thanksgiving is thy covenant God, who is related to thee, in such a bond of love as will bring thee under eternal obligations. Thou art therefore in all thy praise to remember thy relation to Father, Son, and Spirit, thy debt to them for that most blessed relation, thy growing, ever-growing debt. Praise will pay none of it. The saints in glory do but acknowledge it. While they are praising more, the sum is increasing. O my soul! beg of thy God to give thee grace, that thine acknowledgments may be in some measure like theirs. They are crying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God, giving glory for the Father's love in Jesus, and for their experience of it by the eternal Spirit. May this subject be thine, more spiritual, more holy every day, till it be what theirs is, perfect and without intermission.

Since it is thy privilege, O my soul, to pray to thy covenant God, and to praise him for covenant mercies, then thou wilt highly prize the HOLY SCRIPTURES, because without them thou canst not know what to pray for, nor what is indeed a mercy. Thy faith has nothing to stand upon but the word of God, and nothing to praise him for but mercies therein promised and by believing received. Oh how dear, then, should his word be to thee! how greatly studied, how diligently heard! that by it thou mayest grow in every grace, which is needful for thy holy walk with God. It is the appointed means by which the Holy Spirit acts. It is his great instrument in beginning and carrying on spiritual life. He opens the understanding to know the scriptures; he inclines the will and the affections to receive them in the love of the truth, and he influences the whole man to submit

to live under the obedience of faith. Whatever strength, victory, comfort, or blessing of any kind he bestows, it comes by obeying the truth through the Spirit: so that thou canst not go on in thy walk with God but by constant and believing use of the scriptures. They should be thy study night and day, heard and read carefully, mixed with faith, treasured up in thy memory, received into thy heart, and brought into thy life, and all by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, in order to thine enjoyment of the promised blessings of the Father's love through the Son's salvation. Thus the word will be the means of thy maintaining fellowship with the blessed Trinity. By mixing faith with it thou wilt be constantly receiving from them covenant mercies; and so thou wilt go forward. Thy steps will be ordered aright according to the word, and thy way will be prosperous.

Consider then, O my soul, whether thou art making this use of the scriptures. Dost thou find the means of thy growth in divine knowledge, in faith and love? Do they really promote thy communion with God, and on that account are they daily more thy study and thy delight? Never think of hearing or reading them without praying for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that they may be the means of keeping up fellowship with thy Father in Jesus. For this end they were revealed; and if this end be not answered, they profit thee nothing. Make it then thy constant practice—before hearing, to pray for a spiritual appetite, that, as new born babes desire milk, so thou mayst hunger and thirst for the good word of life—in hearing, beg of God that thou mayst feed upon the word and digest it, and thine inward man may be nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine—after hearing, pray for a sanctified memory to treasure up for use what thou hast learnt, that, as occasion shall serve, it may be realized and brought into practice, thy life and conversation being cast into the mould of the word. With the same dependence on thy divine Teacher, read, as well as hear, the scriptures. Meditate on them. Converse about them, expecting to find them able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus, and, as thy faith in him increases, able to bring in richer experience of thy Father's love in him.

How sweet is prayer, how delightful is praise, how blessed is hearing and reading the word, when these are the means of meeting and conversing with God! His presence puts the highest honour upon them, and exalts duty into a royal privilege: for he is present as a Father with his children. Oh what a dignity is it to have God for our Father! What a happiness to have free fellowship with him in this dearest relation! In thy daily hearing and reading his word, observe, O my soul, what is spoken of this holy fellowship; and seek to maintain it, and to improve it in every appointed way, particularly in keeping the command of thy dying friend—

Do this in remembrance of me. When his disciples meet together for this purpose, then place the whole dependence of thy heart upon thy crucified Saviour. Considering the infinite and everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of his body and soul to take away sin, draw near in faith to feast upon it, for his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Look well to the end of the institution. It was not only to remind thee of, but also to convey to thee, all the blessings of that one offering, which perfects for ever It was to teach thee that thy spiritual life, and every grace and comfort of it, are as dependent upon Christ crucified as the life of thy body is upon the meat and drink of this world. Thy life comes from his death. Thy life is nourished by feeding upon Christ thy passover, who was sacrificed for thee. He intended by the bread to point out unto thee his body, and by the wine, his blood—by eating and drinking them, thy taking and living upon him—by thy bodily support received from them, the nourishment of thy soul by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. He would have thee to look through the signs to the things sanctified. Thou art not to rest in the outward act, but to rest in the promise in the word of God. Thy faith is not to be exercised about the Lord's Supper as a duty; but it is to be exercised upon his word; and what he has therein promised to make it, that thou art to expect in taking it. He appointed it to be the means of communicating with him, and of thy enjoying fellowship with him in his sufferings. It is a spi-

ritual believing act, in which thou art invited to partake of the paschal lamb. It is the Lord's passover, and will certainly answer every purpose for which he instituted it. He appointed it to be the means of safety from the destroyer, of deliverance from bondage, of free and full forgiveness of all sins, of a happy passage through the Red Sea, and of the everlasting possession of the promised inheritance. For these gracious purposes the Father's love gave his Son to be a lamb slain, and then a lamb feasted on: and the Holy Spirit makes it a feast indeed. It is to the believing receiver, spiritually, whatever the passover was to the Jews on their coming out of Egypt. It is a communion with the blessed Trinity; with the Father for providing such a banquet of love: with the Son for giving himself to be a lamb slain, and to be a spiritual repast to his people in earth and in heaven; with the Holy Spirit for rendering the bread which is broken the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing the communion of the blood of Christ: communion signifies union with—the believer united to Christ—one with Christ—a member in his body—lives in him, and on him, has communications of life, nourishment, strength, comfort, &c. as the members have from their union with the head. He has a real inward fellowship with Jesus in his cross and passion, in his resurrection and ascension, in his intercession and sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He communicates now with Jesus in all the blessings of his Father's love, and will communicate with him in all his Father's glory. Oh what a privilege is the Lord's Supper when it is thus the means of communion with the Son, and with his Father through the Spirit! What an honour is it to be admitted to a feast instituted by the Lamb of God, and for the enjoyment of the love of God! What a blessing is it to sit down now to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and to partake by faith of its spiritual realities and delights! There is nothing beyond this upon earth; and it has sometimes been to the believing receiver a foretaste of heaven. Yes, blessed be God, it has been, even to thee, O my soul, unworthy as thou art of one crumb from the Master's table, a feast of fat things, of wines kept, even of fat things full of marrow, of wines kept, and well refined. And when thou hast not been so highly feasted, yet thou hast enjoyed solid communion. Partaking of the bread and wine according to the Lord's institution, and depending on the Lord's promise, thou hast been fed and nourished at his table. The virtue of the Spirit has been put forth in thy heart, and thou hast as truly by faith eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of the Son of man, as thou didst eat the bread and drink the wine. It was, strictly speaking, a *communion:* being united to Christ, thou wast a partaker of Christ, and hadst fellowship with him in his life and death. Oh pray for more of this. Beg of the Holy Spirit to increase thy communion with Jesus, that thou mayst live more in him and on him, and thereby enjoy more of the love of thy heavenly Father. Plead his promise, and expect the fulfilling of it: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," John vi. 56, 57.

Viewing the duties of the first table in this light, how exalted are they and spiritual! What a glory does it put upon them that the believer has fellowship with the eternal Three, and in prayer, and praise, in hearing and reading the word; and at the Lord's Supper, he enjoys their covenant mercies, partaking of them now as really by faith, as ever he will by sense in heaven? The law written and engraven in stone was glorious; but the law thus written upon his heart excelleth in glory. The two first tables of stone were broken; the other two are lost; but no time shall deface the writing of the Holy Spirit. The new heart, turned in love to God, shall keep his impression for ever. Faith should rest securely upon this; because he has undertaken to abide for ever with his own people, that the purposes of the Father's love, and the blessings of the Son's salvation, may be always enjoyed by them. In remembrance of this great truth they keep the

LORD'S-DAY. They rest on it from labour, declaring thereby their belief of the rest which the eternal Three have provided in Jesus—a rest in their souls—given without their labour and pains—secured to them by covenant—kept for them by almighty power—a sabbath remaining for the people of God, into which

they shall as certainly enter, as Jesus, their forerunner, is entered. Sabbath signifies a day of rest. It was set apart in memory of God's finishing the works of the first creation: and is observed now in memory of his finishing the works of the new creation. The end for which the world was made will be answered soon; and then it, and all the works therein, shall be burnt up, and the place of them found no more: but the glorious work of the God-man shall endure for ever. In honour of this greatest work of God, we keep the Lord's-day. It is his Sabbath—a day eternally famous for his finishing the work of salvation, and entering into his rest. "And we who have believed, says the apostle, do enter into rest." We do enter into it now by faith, and we share with him in his Sabbath. The atonement which he made, the righteousness which he wrought out, the victory which he obtained, the works which he perfected for ever, and the glory which he now inherits, we enjoy at present by believing, and enter upon the possession of them. According to our faith, such is our rest. He that believes, without doubt or wavering, in the finished salvation of Jesus, he will have the peace of God ruling in his conscience; he will experience the perfect love of God to him, which will make him rest in his love to God; and then he will delight himself in the ways of God. This is the Christian sabbath. It consists in resting upon Jesus, and in depending upon his having finished the works of redemption, and then in living upon them for our souls as much as we do upon the works of creation for our bodies.

Sweet is the day of rest, spent in this holy employment! Happy time! set apart for spiritual intercourse with God, and consecrated for keeping up fellowship with him in his fatherly love in Jesus, and for receiving from him communications of his graces and blessings. Thrice happy day! in which this fellowship is kept up, and these graces and blessings are enjoyed. By this heavenly converse the inward man is renewed with growing strength: his faculties are enlarged; and their happiness is increased: by which means he comes nearer to the spiritual rest of the heavenly sabbath. He calls it his delight, holy of the Lord, honourable; because the end of its institution is answered to him, and he has on it happy communion with his God. When he draws near to God in his appointed ways, he finds God in them, and experiences his loving kindness, which is better than life itself. Blessed is the man who is thus highly favoured. He enters within the vail into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and finds a most loving Father upon a throne of grace. In every service on the Lord's day he seeks a more intimate acquaintance and more spiritual fellowship with him. His very heart is engaged in this work. His soul thirsteth, and his very flesh longeth to meet God, as he has met him in the sanctuary. Therein he has found communications of grace, which have rendered the ordinances delightful indeed. He rejoices in hopes of meeting God, and of drawing near to him in prayer; of praising him still more and more for his abundant mercies; of hearing the reviving sound of Gospel grace, and of everlasting love; and of receiving it, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God; and of sitting down to the banquet of heaven in communion with Christ crucified, through him partaking of the Father's love by the Spirit's influence. Blessed is he of the Lord, who is thus spiritual in sabbath duties. By keeping up constant communion with God in them, his blessedness is increasing. He is already in possession of the same things which his elder brethren are enjoying in heaven; and he will become more heavenly-minded while he maintains daily fellowship with the eternal Three in their covenant offices and blessings.

Consider, O my soul, that these privileges are thine. Look well to thine improvement of them. Remember, thou art already, by believing, entered into rest. Thy sabbath is begun—a day whose sun shall never set—whose glory shall shine brighter for evermore. May thine enjoyment of this rest, which is so glorious, be growing, until thou attain to the eternal sabbath. Oh, pray thy Lord to lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, to vouchsafe thee more of the love of his heart and more of the bounty of his hand, more communion with him, and more communications from him, that thou mayst be growing up into Jesus in all things, and be ready, whenever he calls thee, to enter in with him into his perfect rest

Thus the first table-duties are kept. By the teaching of the Holy Spirit they become Gospel privileges. When he makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, then we take the Three in Jehovah to be our God. We know our Father in Christ, believe in him, and love him. We will have no other gods but him. We give his honour to none, his name to none, our time and heart-service to none, but him. His love made known to us, engages our affections, and puts us upon seeking fellowship with him in all appointed ways. Yea, the more we know of his perfect love to us, the more we are disposed to love him, and to witness it in every thing we do. It becomes our study to walk before him in all well pleasing; for we find it our happiness. Whether we eat or drink, rise up, or lie down to rest, follow our worldly calling, or have any dealings with men, we endeavour to do all in faith. This makes the common things of life spiritual actions; because in them we maintain intercourse with God. This is indeed the heavenly temper of the children of the Most High. They seek the presence and the blessings of their Father in Jesus in all they do. They are taught to live in a simple dependence upon him. They acknowledge this dependence by looking up to him for every thing needful, and having received it by giving him all his glory, then they are returned in heart and life to that God from whom they had departed by unbelief.

Most blessed return! For now the old sinful nature, with its affections and lusts, is pardoned, and thereby they have lost their dominion. They have no right to exercise their tyranny any longer. The base, selfish tempers which rendered a man a plague to others, and often a burden to himself, are dethroned. The pardoning them is subduing them. These always go together. They kept the understanding in darkness; but now it is light in the Lord. They blinded the conscience, and made it insensible; but now it has seen its guilt, and has found peace with God. The heart was engaged in their service; but now God has set up his throne in it, and sweetly rules over the affections. Thus a free pardon brings a man into liberty. He ceases to be a slave to his selfish tempers. A full pardon brings him full victory over them; for then he has the blood of Jesus to cleanse him from all sin, and the Spirit of Jesus to subdue all sin. He is taken into the protection of Christ, and is his free-man. None shall make him a slave. The Spirit of Christ rules in him, and makes him willing to live under the reign of grace. He dwells and abides with him, to preserve in his heart the love of God, and to produce in it the proper fruits of that love towards men. Thus he brings the sinner to love the

Duties of the second table, which our Lord has summed up in one sentence: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This love was lost at the fall. Nothing is in mankind, by nature, but selfishness. He is a slave to divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Every age has felt this malady, and complained of it; but no human means have been able to remedy it. Fine systems of ethics, and beautiful plans of natural religion, have been tried; the aid of strong reasoning, assisted with the force of logic and metaphysics, has been called in, but all in vain. Selfish tempers broke through their cobweb arguments, and sported with their imaginary bonds. Sometimes they polished the outside a little, and made a man a courtier: he looked, and smiled, and seemed to love; but they did not reach his heart. This is the prerogative of the Lord God. He only, who made us creatures, can make us new creatures. And until we are new born of God, we have every thing in us opposite to brotherly love. But when we are born of the Spirit, then we are taught of him to love one another. He teaches it, and he enforces it. His lessons are entirely practical. He not only informs the understanding, but also influences the affections. Having disposed and enabled the heart to love God, he evidences the power of this divine love by its genuine fruits towards men. These are inseparable from their cause. Divine love is never without brotherly love; for, so far as the love of God is felt, it produces loving tempers: it opens and enlarges the heart, as the warm beams of the sun open and expand the flowers. The agency which performs this is almighty. The Holy Spirit, having begotten the new nature, writes upon it the law of love. He keeps it willing to resist, and makes it able to overcome, the selfish tempers of the old man. The

apostle Peter has given us a delightful description of the manner of the divine proceeding herein, 1 Pet. i. 21, 22, 23. "Christ was manifest in those last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God: seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The Christians, to whom he writes, were partakers of the new birth: they were born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. The Holy Spirit was the author of their regeneration. The word of truth was the means which he made use of: they obey the truth through the Spirit. By believing it they were begotten again to a lively faith and hope in God. They evidenced their love to him by their unfeigned love of the brethren: they love him that begat, and loved those also that were begotten of him. From whence it appears, that the love of the brethren is not in the heart by nature, but is from the grace of the Holy Spirit. He gives a new heart, and he sheds abroad in it the love of God, which, by his influence, works mightily in opposing and overcoming our selfish tempers, and in establishing the practice of second table-duties. These spring from divine love. The Holy Spirit joins them together, as the cause and the effect. He teaches no man to love God, without teaching him also to love the brethren. He rains and shines upon the tree of love: under his cultivation it thrives. He brings forth the sweet and loving tempers of the new man, and they bear fruit abundantly. And blessed fruit it is; for God has great glory from it, and men much good. Love thinketh, speaketh, and doeth no evil. Yea, it cannot be in the heart, without a desire to do good to all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith—to do good to their bodies and souls—to give honour to whom honour is due—to preserve their lives—their property—their chastity—their good name—to bear no false witness, but always to speak the truth of them—and to covet none of their blessings, either spiritual or temporal. This is morality—christian morality—for it is learned nowhere but in the school of Christ. What his Spirit teaches, he enables also to perform, which moral persuasion cannot. He gives a will and a power to put off the selfish tempers of the old man, and to put on the loving graces of the new man: these graces he preserves by his almighty agency, and calls them into daily practice, through faith working by love—love to God from a sense of his infinite goodness—and love to man for God's sake. Thus the second table-duties, when done out of gratitude to God for his infinite mercies, help the believer on in his walk heavenwards, and are the means of maintaining constant fellowship with his God.

Is this, O my soul, thy happy experience? Examine carefully. What are thy tempers? What is thy practice, with respect to loving thy neighbour as thyself? There is great complaint in the world of the want of brotherly love. And no wonder. It cannot be in them who are wholly lovers of themselves. But may not the same complaint be taken up of the household and family of faith? Are not the children of the same Father deficient in brotherly love? Yes, they are. Too, too often they live below their privilege, and thereby bring great dishonour upon God, and give great offence to men. Be humbled, O my soul, for thine own failing. Remember, what reason thou hast to mourn for the infirmities of thy love—how barren it is in its proper fruits—how cold when it should be fervent—how polluted when it should be pure—how covetous when it should be liberal. Hast thou duly attended to the cause of this? and does it grieve thee to thy heart? Wouldst thou be saved from self-love, and increase in brotherly love, yet more and more? Since this is thy case, meditate carefully upon what is promised, and pray earnestly for what is provided, for the subduing of those tempers which are enemies to brotherly love, and which, if not subdued, will hinder thee from enjoying the love of God in thy walk with him.

First, Consider thy state. Thou art a pardoned sinner, not under the law, but under grace—freely, fully saved from the guilt of all thy sins. There is none to condemn, God having justified thee. He sees thee in his Son, washed

in his blood, clothed in his righteousness; and he embraces him and thee, the head and the members with the same affection.

Secondly, Consider what is promised to them who are in Christ. Sin shall not have dominion over them. Pardoned sin shall not reign. It cannot; for it is dethroned. Thou art therefore free from its bondage. Stand fast in this liberty. Now the condemning power of sin is taken out of thy conscience, make use of the grace provided in Jesus to deliver thine heart from the love of it, and thy conversation from the slavish service of it. And remember, this grace is almighty. Trust in it, and thou shalt be saved from the tyranny of every sin. Therefore,

Thirdly, Read the great charter of grace, and mark to what glorious privileges thou art entitled. Being saved from the guilt of all sin, and having a promise of being saved from the dominion of all sin, as the Lord's freeman, thou art by faith to claim thy birthright and to enjoy it. Since Christ has given thee liberty, to whom shouldst thou be a slave? Put off therefore the old man with his lusts and deeds; serve him no longer: it is a blessed part of redemption to be saved from his service. God be thanked, that he may be put off, as a garment which you have done with, and will be put on no more. Away with it, it is filthy and abominable altogether. Yea, worse still: the plague is in it. Death and hell are in it: for the old man, sinful nature, thus to be put off, is a body of sin; and selfish tempers are his members; such as anger, wrath, malice, lies, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. These must be put off, or they will be always plotting and acting against brotherly love. Therefore the new man, renewed in the spirit of his mind, opposes them, and is mighty through God to mortify them. By the same power he puts on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forgiveness of injuries: even as Christ forgave him, so he forgives: and unto all these graces he puts on love, which is the complete binding of them together. What an amiable character is here of the new man! He is created anew in Christ Jesus, that he may exercise every kind and benevolent temper to the brethren. He is renewed in his heart to the unfeigned love of them; and is enabled to manifest it by every work and labour of love. And lest the vile tempers of the old man, still in being, although dethroned, should get dominion again, he is strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man to crucify them day by day. Since this is hard work, consisting in continual and severe self-denial, no less than in cutting off right hand, and in plucking out right eye lusts, for thine encouragement to persevere, consider,

Fourthly, that thou art *in* Christ—a member in his body—and in him thou hast perfect and eternal redemption from the old man of sin with his affections and lusts. The more this is believed, the more will the fruits of it appear. Faith in the absolute and everlasting victory of thy glorified head will animate thee as one of his members to resist thy vanquished foes, knowing thou art a partaker of his victory, and in his strength and to his glory thou art fighting against them. In him thou hast already conquered. In him thou shalt be more than a conqueror. Reckon thyself, therefore, to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God *in* Jesus Christ thy Lord. And depend on him for the power of his death, that he may put it forth in thee, and mortify sin, and for the power of his resurrection to quicken thee to newness of life. Thy communion with him in his death and resurrection will be in proportion to thy faith. If thou believest steadfastly that thou art one with him, thou wilt find the effect of it in steadfast communion. Cleave then to him, as a branch to the vine. Planted together in the likeness of his death, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to crucify thy selfish tempers. Planted together in the likeness of his resurrection, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to keep thee alive to God. To this fellowship with Jesus thou art called. Thou hast a right to communicate with him in his life and death. And whilst thou art enjoying it by the faith of the Son of God, sin shall have no more dominion over thee than it has over him. This being thy glorious birthright, O my soul, put honour upon it. Enjoy it in the peace of thy conscience, and in the love of thy heart. Read thy perfect redemption in Jesus from every

thing opposite to brotherly love, and improve this thy experience. As there is sufficient grace promised and provided for thee, see thou make use of it, and manifest it openly in thy tempers and in thy walk; for, consider,

Fifthly, Thy God and Father calls upon thee to give glory to him for his love to thee by exercising love towards the brethren: and thou art bound to this by ten thousand ties. Has he loved thee freely? dost thou know it? and is the grateful sense of it upon thy heart? How then can it be hid? It cannot; it will manifest itself, as light does. The Father has chosen thee in his Son, that he might communicate to thee of his goodness; and he has made thee a child of light, that thou mightst reflect the rays of his goodness upon others. Thou art to show forth the praises of him that hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light. He hath called thee out of the deadness and blindness of thy natural state, and hath enlightened thee with the light of life. How marvellous, that it should ever shine upon thee! Marvellous indeed, that thou shouldst shine, as a light in the world! Admire this grace. Let others admire it with thee by seeing the reality, and by feeling the comfort of it. As the sun not only enlightens, but also enlivens with his fruitful rays the face of the earth, and cheers every creature upon it, so let thy light shine before men. Give them clear proof of thy love to God by thy love to them: let them feel the blessed fruits of it, that they may see thy good works, and glorify thy Father who is in heaven. Love in thy heart will show itself: it will communicate its gracious rays, and the Father of lights will have the praise. This should be thine end, as it is his. He aims at his own glory in all his mercies: this aim should be thine also. Thy Father calls upon thee to do good to others, that he may be glorified thereby. Oh what a high calling is thine! What an honour does God put upon thee! Thou art to bring him glory from men—from his own children: for their bowels are to be refreshed by thee—and from others, that, whereas they would speak against thee as an evil doer, they may, by thy good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Aim at this. Look at no motive to do good to men below the glory of God: and remember, thy doing it may be the means of his visiting them, as he visited thee, with his great salvation. Oh blessed fruit of brotherly love! May it be the happy effect of thy light shining before men! May God be daily honoured by it, and the comfort, and, if it please him, the salvation, of his people be thereby promoted! Yea, Lord, this is my prayer. My heart says, *Amen.*

If thou findest it very difficult to live in the constant practice of brotherly love, meditate, O my soul, upon the Gospel motives for an increase of faith, and seek for the promised assistance to enable thee to love others as God hath loved thee. Above all, expect the effectual teaching of the Holy Ghost. He only can write this delightful law upon the heart—the fair impression of it is kept by his power—and the exercise of it in thy tempers and walk is the work of his grace. Oh pray then for a constant supply of the Spirit, that in all thy dealings with mankind it may appear thou hast been with Jesus. Set his most amiable life before their eyes. Give them reason to honour his beneficence, from thy copying it legibly after him. Let his love to thee be glorified from thy labour of love to them. Study to show forth his praises, and go about doing good, as he did. And hereby convince the world that Jesus Christ was the greatest moralist, and that his disciples come the nearest to the perfect pattern of their master: as a poet of our own observes—

> Talk they of *morals*? O thou bleeding love!
> Thou maker of new morals to mankind!
> The grand morality is love of thee.

The love of Jesus teaches and enforces the love of the brethren. The spirit of Jesus writes it upon the heart, and makes it practical in the life. And thus the two tables are joined together: and love to him that begat, produces love to them that are begotten of him. When the happy believer is walking in this love to his Father and to his family, then he will live in the observance of the duties which relate to himself; for he was taught them when he returned in his heart to God. And every step he walks with God is in the practice of them.

The first temptation was an offer of independence—"Ye shall be as Gods"—man was drawn away by it, and fell from his high estate. Still this mother sin is fruitful in fallen man. In great mercy there is a pardon provided, and in the way of receiving the pardon, there is a remedy for it. The infinite wisdom of God so contrived the way of our recovery, that without Christ we can do nothing. His salvation undertaken and finished for us, his salvation applied to us, the blessings of his salvation enjoyed by us in time and in eternity, are the free gifts of his free grace. He is the author. He is the finisher. He carries it on from first to last. All our sufficiency is of him. We cannot without him so much as think a good thought. Therefore his redeemed people are brought off from all trust in any other object, and are taught to place their whole dependence for salvation, and for every thing that accompanies it, upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

To this end, the Holy Spirit, the great convincer of sin, had made them acquainted with themselves. He had awakened them to a right knowledge of their state, of which they had not been sensible before; and they found that they were fallen and apostate creatures. He showed them sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and they tasted some of the bitter fruits of it: they felt in what a dreadful condition their departure from God had left them—so ignorant that they could not by any human means attain to the least saving knowledge of God—so guilty, that let them do all they could, still the condemning sentence of the law stood out against them—so unholy, that soul and body were sold under sin, and ready to every unholy word and work—so utterly helpless, that it was impossible they should of themselves attain true happiness, or escape deserved misery. The Holy Spirit taught them these lessons practically. His conviction carried demonstration with it. He not only made them feel their guilt and their danger, but he also opened a way for pardon and safety. He led them to Jesus, and in him they found every thing needful for their salvation—treasured up for them by the free covenant love of the Father, secured to them by the fulfilling of all covenant conditions in the life and death of the God-man—and received by the faith of the operation of the Holy Ghost; by whom they were made new creatures in Christ Jesus—members under him their head—united as intimately as the branches are to the vine—and living by, and in, and on him, every moment, and for every thing. Thus the glorifier of Jesus teaches all his members to depend upon the fulness of their head, and he abides with them in order to keep them in this dependence. He testifies to them of Jesus—"He is your whole salvation, your all in all; you have not, you never will have, any thing to glory in, but in the Lord—whatever good you receive comes from his grace—whatever evil you escape, is from his blessing—and if ever you have eternal life, it will be the free gift of God in Christ Jesus. Your bodies also are dependent on him, as well as your souls: personal, family, national mercies, are his royal favours, and bestowed out of his sovereign bounty." Thus he teaches believers. He humbles them, that they may exalt the Saviour. He makes them poor in spirit, that they may live upon his riches. He keeps them sensible of their own emptiness, that they may be making constant use of the Saviour's fulness, and living in an absolute dependence upon him for every thing. While they live thus by the faith of the Son of God, every high thought is brought into subjection to him. Pride is daily mortified. Self-complacency is abhorred. Self-admiration is abominable. Humility is become their clothing, and they cannot put it off; because every moment they are making use of it. Sins, wants, miseries, temptations, &c. are continually reminding them of their vileness, and of God's goodness. And this truth, enforced by the Holy Spirit, makes them willing to learn of Jesus to be meek and lowly. They become teachable scholars, and sit very low at his feet, where they attain to true humility of heart. And this influences their whole behaviour. In a deep and abiding sense of their entire sinfulness and helplessness, they loathe themselves before God, and walk humbly before men. They feel they are of themselves nothing but sin, and if left to themselves, can be nothing but misery: therefore they put their whole trust and confidence in a covenant God, and his free grace has from them all its glory.

What is thy knowledge, O my soul? and what is thine experience of this

christian poverty of spirit? Art thou acquainted with it in the ground of thine heart? and is it in thy daily practice? Examine thyself, and with diligence: for it is a most blessed grace, advanced to high honour in the court of Jesus. To it he has made many exceeding great and precious promises. Oh! pray to him for this royal gift. Wait on thy divine Prophet, and hear his lessons. He teaches as man cannot. He recommends, he gives, the grace of humility. He makes his scholars truly humble in heart. Observe his abasing doctrine; and may all within thee bow to the power of it!

Observe how he humbles the sinner. He convinces him of his sinful state, of the corruption of his whole nature, and of the depravity of every faculty of soul and body. The sinner is made to feel it and to live under the sense of it: and in order to fasten the conviction, clearer discoveries are daily made of this corruption: for it is a mystery of iniquity. There is no tracing to the bottom its deep laid devices, and never ceasing workings. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it? There is not a man upon earth who knows all that may be known of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of his own sinfulness. When the Lord, who searcheth the heart, has laid open some of its infinite evil, he continues to discover more. Every day brings to light strange workings of corruption. The convinced sinner has deeper views of his helplessness and of his unworthiness: and after many vain legal trials, he at last finds it impossible for him to do anything for which God should pardon him and save him. Thus he is laid low, with his mouth in the dust—Behold, I am vile, filthy, and abominable altogether. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

These are the humbling lessons which the Holy Spirit teaches. He convinces the sinner that there is neither help nor hope in himself, and so leaves him nothing to trust in but the salvation provided in Jesus by covenant love, and given freely by grace. And the manner of receiving this salvation is such as cuts off all occasion of boasting: for faith is the only means appointed of God; and faith is his gift; not bestowed upon the worthy, but upon the ungodly; not for any merit in them, or for any terms or conditions which they have performed or ever will perform; but by an act of absolute sovereignty to the praise of the glory of his own grace. He will have mercy because he will have mercy. Oh humbling consideration! How low does it bring the sinner! How must his proud heart be abased, while he feels himself a debtor for every thing good to the mere will and pleasure of God! And so long as he enjoys those good things, he is kept poor in spirit; because he has none of them in himself. They are laid up in the fulness of Jesus; are to be had from thence only by faith, and are received as the sense of his wants leads the believer to make use of them Living by faith is the death of self-importance. Then the loftiness of man is bowed down, the haughtiness of man is made low, and the Lord alone is exalted.

Observe, O my soul, what an honour God has put upon this grace: "Before honour is humility." Whom God honours, he humbles first. He giveth grace to the humble: because the humble give him all his glory. The highest throne which he has upon earth is in the humblest heart. To it he vouchsafes his constant presence, and makes the greatest communications of his love: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Oh what an honour is here promised to the humble! the greatest they can have on this side of heaven. God will dwell with them; and what a blessing! and his temple shall be in the humble heart. The high and holy One passes by what is in highest esteem among men. He stains the pride of human greatness and goodness. He does not vouchsafe to set up his throne with the princes, nor to give his honour to the learned, of the world: but he puts honour upon the contrite and humble: he condescends to visit them; yea, he delights to dwell with them, and in them—the Highest above all heavens in the lowest hearts. There he communicates his choicest love and richest favours. O my God! bestow upon me this grace which in thy sight is so precious. Humble me, that I may be revived with thy presence, and refreshed daily with thy love. Give me more

humility, and fit me for nearer fellowship with thee. Bring down every high thought, and let me find it true that God resisteth the proud, but giveth more grace unto the humble.

Thus the true poverty of spirit is needful, not only to bring the sinner to Christ, but also to preserve the believer in communion with him: for so long as he walks by faith, every thing will tend to promote this communion. In the daily sense of his wants, he will go to his bountiful Saviour for a supply. In the feeling of his misery, he will depend on his loving Saviour for relief; whereby he will be led to more intercourse with him. What he finds wrong in himself will bring him to live more by faith, and as faith increases, so will his delight in God: he will grow more sensible of his weakness; and that will make him stronger in the Lord. He will know more of his own heart, which will humble him, and keep him dependent on the grace of Jesus. He will see reason not to lean to his own understanding, but ever to pray, Lord, guide me by thy good Spirit! Viewing spots and blemishes in his best doings, his triumph will be—"I will make mention of thy righteousness, Lord Jesus, even of thine ONLY." Thus everything will humble him, and lead him to live more by faith; by which means he will get faster hold of Jesus, live in nearer fellowship, and be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace—two graces at once—the blessing needed, and thankfulness for it. Hereby a sweet intercourse will be kept open. To the humble, God delights to give grace; and they delight to return him his glory. The more he gives, the more glory would they gladly return. And he does give more, and he receives it back again in thanks and praise. Blessed grace! by which this holy fellowship is maintained. Happy humility! by which the heart, being emptied of self, is made capable of receiving the fulness which is of God. Then is the promise fulfilled—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—it is theirs now—not only in title, but also in possession: for the kingdom of God is within them. And they are partakers at present of its blessings and glories, as truly, though not so perfectly, as they will be in heaven. Meditate, O my soul, upon this divine grace. Thou seest the necessity of it. Oh pray earnestly for it, and for more of it. The great idol SELF must be dethroned where God reigns. Thou canst not walk with him unless thou art humble in heart. And if thou hast been walking with him, thou wilt be taught to stop whenever thou beginnest to look at thyself with admiration. Oh beg of the Lord, then, to give thee the true gospel poverty of spirit. It is to be in constant practice, and used for every thing: for thou seest how it keeps up fellowship with God, who makes the greatest communications of himself to the humblest. And the reason is plain: because they return him all his glory. If therefore thou wouldst have much grace in exercise, pray for much humility. O my God! whatever thou givest, give humility with it, that I may not seek self in it, but thine honour; nor lay it out upon myself, but to thy glory. Meek and lowly Jesus, make me like thyself: keep me learning of thee till I am perfectly like thee. I would come always poor to thee to receive of thy riches, and to receive with them an humble heart to praise thee for them. Oh let thy glory be mine end and aim. Let me and mine be thine—I humbled—thou exalted. Let thy graces and gifts bring thee in a constant revenue of praise. And may thine increasing goodness be joined with a constant increase of humility, that my heart and all within me may bless and praise thy holy name to-day and for ever, *Amen.* And,

Let this appear in my whole behaviour to others. This is another blessed fruit of humility. It has an influence over the believer's intercourse with mankind, and renders his tempers and manners loving and amiable. Pride was not made for man; and yet it is in all men, and is the chief parent of human woe. It sets people above their place, and makes them think that they could support the greatest fortunes, and are able to manage the most difficult affairs. Others, as proud as they, deny them their fancied superiority. Hence come wars and fightings, public and private. The sweet grace of humility is sent from heaven to relieve those distresses: for into whatever bosom it enters, it renders men kind to one another, tender-hearted, ready to every good word and work. Thus runs the divine exhortation: "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." This is heart-humility, which the

Holy Spirit requires, and which he bestows. He brings his disciples into humble subjection to God, and then to one another; which has the most happy effects upon public, social, and private happiness. How would these flourish if all men were of a meek and quiet spirit! But there is none of this among the unconverted, and, alas! how little is there among believers! How often are they found, in the proud spirit of the world, acting contrary to the lowly spirit of Jesus! And yet it is not for want of precept, nor for want of promised help; but it is because they are not walking by faith, as becometh the gospel, nor out of love to God's glory studying to recommend humility by their practice. Observe, O my soul, the remedy provided of God for the subduing of all selfish tempers; and pray that it may be effectual in thy life and conversation. "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But God giveth more grace; wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." This scripture cannot speak in vain; for fallen man is certainly such as he is here described. The spirit that dwelleth in him, in his own nature, lusted to envy—a passion made up of pride and discontent—offended with God—and displeased with the blessings which he bestows upon men. It is an enemy to the love both of God and man, and transgresses the law of both tables. Pride brought it into heaven, and the fallen angels brought it into this world. Ever since it entered by sin, natural corruption breaks out very much in envy. But God giveth more grace, to conquer this passion, than sinful nature has to put it forth. He not only gives grace to pardon it, but also more grace to subdue it; so that envy loses its dominion in the reign of grace. We cannot subdue, any more than we can pardon, envy, pride, and such passions; but grace is almighty. Want ever so much, use ever so much, God has still more for you. And he gives more when the creature is humbled enough to take it out of the hands of his mercy. Thus he overcomes envy: "for he resisteth the proud;" he is at open war with them, and they with him. Pride lifts up the creature against the Creator, and puts it upon seeking happiness out of God: this is resisting his sovereignty, attacking his providence, and opposing his law. He is concerned to pull such rebels down, and he says their pride goeth before destruction: "But he giveth grace unto the humble," he gives them grace to humble them, and being emptied, he delights to fill them; for then they are disposed to receive his grace, and to value it. Whatever God gives, the humble give it back again to him. They have the blessing; he has the praise: which is the just tribute due to him for his gifts. And he gives more grace where he can get more glory. Thus he subdues self-conceit, with its various proud workings. And as grace reigns over them, humility prevails; which has a friendly aspect towards mankind. It keeps brotherly love in the heart, and tends mightily to the practice of every social virtue. Humility suffereth long, and is kind; humility envieth not; humility vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil.

Consider, O my soul, those motives to a holy walk. Put them altogether Weigh them carefully again and again. Do it faithfully, as in the presence of God. And then try whether thou art walking in the way of duty with a free spirit. Dost thou proceed upon evangelical or upon legal principles? Dost thou serve God for wages, or for love? Examine thy heart. God looks chiefly at it. How is it in duty? Is thine obedience to justify thee in the least? or does it spring from a sense of thy being justified freely and fully? Art thou going about to establish thine own righteousness? Or dost thou submit to the righteousness of God? Art thou working from life or for life? I require thee to examine diligently, by the light of the word and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, what thy motives are; for there is no acceptable obedience but what is done in faith. Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. If thou art acting aright, the love of Christ is constraining thee to obedience. Thou art living under the influence of free grace. Thy conscience is at peace with God. Thou hast sweet liberty to serve him without fear. Thy heart delights in his service; and love makes his ways the joy of thy soul. Thou knowest what Jacob felt when he served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her

A Gospel spirit does the same to God—love makes long service short—and hard service easy. Nothing is pain, which love does. And this is gospel obedience. It is faith, working by love, which refines duty into a grace: the commandments are exalted into privileges: the ordinances become happy means of fellowship with God. The believer meets God in them, and by free converse he exercises and improves his love. He draws near to God, and God draws near to him in prayer, in praise, in hearing the word, at the Lord's supper, and in all sabbath duties. In these ways God manifests his gracious presence, and the believer rejoices in it. God communicates his grace, and the believer receives it with thankfulness. O my soul, pray before duty for much of this communion with God in it. Seek it as the one great end of all duty. And if thou findest it, bless and praise the goodness of thy God. But still seek to be more spiritual and evangelical, that the fruits of thy fellowship with God may appear in thy practice of the duties of the second table. Love to God will manifest itself by love to men: for the Holy Spirit teaches all his disciples to love one another; and he teaches effectually. He not only makes them understand what brotherly love is, but he also gives it. They become partakers of the grace, and are enabled to practise it. Thus he recommends and enforces his lessons. He renders his scholars kind to one another, and tender-hearted. He puts forth his mighty power, and subdues the vile, selfish tempers of the old man, and brings into use the benevolent tempers of the new man. While he carries on the gracious work, his disciples grow more acquainted with themselves, and learn heart humility. He makes them feel their fallen state, their sinfulness and their danger: in the sense of their guilt and of their distance from God, they are willing to receive Christ for their whole salvation, and then to enjoy in him all the blessings of the Father's love in earth and heaven.

If thou findest it difficult, O my soul, to walk according to this rule: if to obey from love to God—to love men for God's sake—and in the sense of thine own vileness to be humbled to the dust—if these be hard lessons, consider what makes them so. Where is the difficulty? Is it not in thyself? And is it not chiefly in thy not using and not bringing into practice the principles advanced in the former chapters. Duty must be hard if the spring of obedience be not in motion; but if this act freely, then all will go on well.

Thy whole conduct through life depends upon the nature of the salvation of which thou art a partaker by grace. Consider it attentively. The growing knowledge of it will engage thine affections to a willing obedience. Is it not a complete salvation—an absolutely perfect work—yea, the greatest work of God? Because all the rest come from it, and lead to it. Is it not the infinitely wise contrivance of the eternal Three, for which everlasting glory is to be given to every divine attribute? When every other work of God shall cease, for this all heaven will to eternity be ascribing honour, and blessing, and praise, to Father, Son, and Spirit. Attend, O my soul, to the scripture account of this salvation. Review the glory of it. Read again and again the revealed descriptions of it, till thy heart be satisfied that this salvation is as perfect and complete as the Lord God Almighty could make it. This is its character. Hast thou studied it well? and art thou well grounded and established in the belief of it? Mind! this is the foundation. If this totter, so will all the superstructure. Oh, pray then, and be earnest in prayer, that God would enlarge thy views of the infinitely glorious and everlastingly perfect salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

As thou growest more acquainted with it, thou wilt see less reason to be discouraged at the experience of what thou art in thyself. It is a salvation for sinners—such as thou art—and no way differing from thee. Only when they are called to the knowledge of the truth, they are acquainted with their fallen state, are made sensible of their helplessness and of their misery, but are made willing to cast their souls at God's command upon the Lord Jesus, trusting to the peace which he made by the blood of the cross. And art not thou in the happy number of these redeemed sinners? Dost not thou believe the record which God hath given of his Son, and look upon it as thy lawful warrant—to make use of what is laid up in the fulness of Jesus—thine to take freely—thine to use fully—the more the better—thine for receiving, without any condition or

any qualification? He loves to give, and without money or money's worth. He thinks himself honoured by the pensioners of his grace, who bring nothing to recommend themselves but their sins and miseries, and yet trust in his promised relief. Herein he glories. When they come to him believing, he bestows his royal gifts upon every one of them: and so far as they believe, he withholds nothing that is needful for their holy walk in the way of duty.

These are the principles which thou art to bring into practice. Carry them, O my soul, into every act of obedience. Go to prayer and every duty with this faith, that thou art in Christ, and in him a partaker of his finished salvation. Then the Father's love to thee will be manifest, and thou wilt have sweet fellowship with him in all thine approaches to the throne. Whatever thou undertakest, forget not this leading truth. If thou lose sight of it, thou wilt get into darkness: if thou art not influenced by it, thou wilt be brought into bondage. Upon this absolutely perfect salvation thou art to live by faith upon earth, and thou wilt have nothing else to live upon by sense in heaven. Trusting to the complete work of Jesus, thou art to walk with thy God in time, as thou wilt follow the Lamb in eternity, receiving all out of his fulness. Oh view him in this light, and it will have the happiest effects upon thy daily walk. While thou art receiving from him grace for grace, thou wilt live with him in sweet friendship; duty will be the way and means of enjoying the love of thy divine friend; and the more thou art in his company, the more delightful will be the way of his commandments, These are the privileges. Read the promises concerning them. Call to mind what thy Father in Jesus has engaged to give his children. Has he not provided grace sufficient for them? And is it not for his honour, as well as thy profit, that he should give both the will and the power to walk humbly with him? Oh plead his promises. Bind him with his faithfulness. Be importunate with him; and pray without ceasing. Let this be thy daily plea:—

O my God! order my walk according to thy holy word. It is thy mind and will that I should love thee with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and my neighbour as myself: but I am not sufficient for these things. There is no pure love in my soul by nature. Every affection in me is turned from the Creator to the creature. I am in bondage, a slave to lust, sold under sin. I cannot love thee, infinitely lovely as thou art, until thou break my bonds asunder, and set my soul at liberty. But being now redeemed from guilt and fear, I am become thy freeman; and for the unspeakable redemption that is in Jesus, thou wouldst have me to serve thee. Blessed be thy holy name for requiring mine obedience upon this sweet motive,—"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage." On this account, obey me; because I am the Lord your God, and I stand related to you, as your Redeemer from slavery. O my gracious God and Father! I desire upon this motive to keep thy commandments. I believe thou art my God in Jesus, and through him I have redemption from bondage to my sins and enemies. With this free spirit would I always go to duty: but I cannot walk in this liberty, any more than I could at first attain it, without thy grace. O my God! let the spirit of adoption abide with me, that he may draw me nearer to thee in thy ways and ordinances, and I may in them enjoy more of thy presence, and of the light of thy countenance. Thee I seek in them. Thou art the end of all ways and means; and if they lead me not to thee, I go empty away. Gracious God, make thy commandments the joy of my heart, and let them be the means of keeping up holy intercourse and happy fellowship with thee. This my heart pants after. Duty without this is nothing worth. I wait in thine appointed ways for the visits of thy grace, hoping to grow in knowledge and faith, in hope and love. The communion which I have enjoyed has increased my longing. My soul is athirst for God, praying to be more with thee, and more like thee. And is not this what thou requirest, and what thou hast promised to do for me? Grant me then, my gracious God, the prayer of my heart. In all my duties let me enjoy thy presence and communications of thy love. Let me do them in faith, and with a single eye to thy glory. Let me be thus spriritual and heavenly-minded in them, that I may grow up into Christ Jesus in all things.

And I desire, Holy Father, to grow in love to thee, that I may manifest the

fruits of it by my love to mankind. Pardon every selfish temper, which is opposite to the love of the brethren: and teach me to love them, as thou hast loved me. Whatever thou hast promised, fulfil in me. Make me, O thou Spirit of love, like the loving Jesus. Give me his benevolent tempers, and help me to imitate his beneficent actions. Let his love to me be the pattern of my love to them. Since thou hast in much mercy made me a child of light, Oh let me shine before men, that they may see and feel my good works, and may glorify thee for them. And the more thou doest in me, and by me, humble me still more, O my God. Keep me meek and lowly, always ready to give the glory of all my mercies to the Three in Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom be equal honour and praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAPTER VII.

The believer goes on his way rejoicing to God.

HAPPY is the man to whom it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe. He has the blessing of peace. He is reconciled to God through faith in the blood of Jesus: and he is freely justified through faith in the righteousness of Jesus. The Father has accepted him in his beloved Son; and it is the joy of his soul to know it: therefore he loves God, because God first loved him. In the enjoyment of this love he finds his heaven begun. By the same Spirit who manifested it, and shed it abroad in his heart, he is kept seeking for more discoveries of it. In every appointed means he waits. As the hart panted after the water-brooks, so panteth his soul after more of the presence of God, and of the light of his loving countenance. Having a command—seek ye my face—he obeys it from his heart: but his chief view in obedience is to behold the face of the Lord turned to him in love. He wants fellowship with God in duty, which highly ennobles and also endears it to him. He performs it in faith, and in a free spirit. He goes to it as a beloved child to a most loving parent; and his heavenly Father meets him in it, receives him graciously, speaks to his heart, and makes him sensible that he can deny him no manner of thing which is good. Hence the ways of duty become ways of pleasantness. The farther he advances in them, and the more spiritual he grows in the performance of them, he finds clear communications of his Father's grace and love, which still increase his joy, and afford him surer earnests and happier foretastes of joy unspeakable and full of glory.

As for the ungodly, it is not so with them. They are always seeking after joy. They are busy, and weary themselves in the pursuit of it; but they cannot find it. While they are turned in heart from the Lord, they look downwards for it, where it is not. They expect it will spring out of the ground: and if they cannot discover it upon the surface, they will dig into the bowels of the earth for treasures of hidden joy. But they disquiet themselves in vain. It is the sovereign decree of the Almighty that nothing can make a sinner truly happy but God in Christ. This they will not believe; and therefore they go from creature to creature, from object to object, inquiring, Where is the best joy to be found? Each promises them—It is in me. But each disappoints them. And yet they go on, seeking it to-day in that very thing which deluded them yesterday. Yea, their foolish hearts are willingly deluded. They love to be pursuing what it is impossible they should attain. If, after many trials, they find the emptiness of one creature comfort, then they turn to another: and they will try the whole compass of beings and things, and will at last die in the trial, rather than seek for joy where it is holy, perfect, and everlasting.

The believer is saved from this vain pursuit. He has been convinced of the insufficiency of the creature to make him happy. He has seen an end of all perfection in it. He can say with the royal preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"—all is changeable and imperfect under the sun; for the whole

world lieth in wickedness and under the curse. Deeply sensible of his error in having sought for joy in the way of destruction, he now seeks it in the living God. Here he comes to the supreme good, the spring-head of true joy: and the streams which he receives from thence are always in proportion to his faith. If this be strong, there is great joy in the soul. If this be weak, joy is at a low ebb. The effect is according to the cause which produces it. Joy in God is the effect of faith; according to the apostle's prayer, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy in believing." There is a present fulness of joy, which we have by believing, as there is a future fulness of joy, which we shall have by sense. So that joy rises as believing does—fulness of believing brings in ALL joy—present enjoyment increasing as the title to fulness is clear. The present is the divine pledge of the future, and is therefore given us, that by believing we may now rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of our salvation.

From hence it appears how necessary it is to the believer's walking in joy that his understanding should be clearly enlightened with the knowledge of the doctrines of grace, and that his heart should be established in the belief of them. Thou canst not, O my soul, review them too much, nor meditate upon them too long; for they enter into the very essence of all true joy. Study the Gospel method of making reconciliation for iniquity, which was the work of Immanuel, and of reconciling man to God, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Has he done this in thee? and art thou reconciled to God? Is thy conscience at peace? Is thine heart happy through faith in the atonement and righteousness of thy Saviour? Art thou satisfied of thy perfect acceptance in the beloved? Dost thou therefore obey thy Father out of gratitude, and go to duty to meet him, and to have fellowship with him in his love, and to glorify him for it? Dost thou find his presence? Is he with thee in all means? and art thou seeking in them for nearer and more intimate communion with him? Since this is thy case, what return wilt thou make for such inestimable favours? Surely thou wilt be glad in the Lord, and wilt rejoice in the God of thy salvation. Being at peace with him, and a partaker of his love—waiting for the establishing of this peace and love in the way of obedience, and expecting more communion with thy God in the way of duty, who can have greater reason to rejoice? A saved sinner, delivered by mere grace from wrath and hell, entitled to all spiritual blessings from Christ Jesus, and already admitted to partake of them, may sing and make melody in his heart all the way to heaven. And yet, alas! how often art thou, O my soul, in heaviness, walking in distress and cast down, as if thy hope of rejoicing was in vain! And this is not thy case alone: it is too common. How many of God's children spend their days in a mournful frame, and seem to forget their high calling and undoubted title to the fulness of joy. Meditate a little upon the ingratitude of this behaviour; and may the Gospel motives to rejoice in the Lord always be the means of saving thee from an unthankful and mournful temper.

First observe, he requires it of thee. The Scripture speaks much of the holy joy of believers, and calls for it. They are in duty bound to be glad in their God, as much as to pray to him: for he is always bestowing mercies upon them, which demand their everlasting tribute of thanks: and they cannot be thankful without being joyful. How closely were these two united in the holy Psalmist! None ever was more famous for praising God, or for rejoicing in God. What he felt himself he often exhorts the redeemed to experience: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright: light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart: rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." Remember his righteousness and holiness, how great they are, and how great the grace is which has found out a way to make you righteous and holy. Remember those blessings with faith, and your hearts will be glad, and your mouth will praise God with joyful lips. What a sense had the prophet of those blessings, when he broke forth into this acknowledgment! "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord! my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath co-

vered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." These are the wedding garments with which the heavenly bridegroom adorns his church, and in which he introduces her to the eternal banquet of love. Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Blessed are they indeed: for they are arrayed in royal robes; their souls are all glorious with the beauties of Immanuel, with his divine righteousness and matchless graces. They have reason now to rejoice greatly: for they shall soon come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever. These Scriptures prove evidently, that believers are called upon to rejoice. It is their bounden duty to be glad in their God; for they are not living like his children, and making up their happiness in their Father's love, unless they are rejoicing in his rich and everlasting blessings: for

Secondly, Joy arises from the sense of some good. Joy in God arises from the sense of his being our chief good, and of our interest in him. And this is the joy of faith: which is not in the least like the light frothy joy of the sensualist, nor the wanton mirth of the unthinking multitude. It is not drawn, as worldly joy is, from vain perishing things, but from the word of God, which standeth fast for ever. It springs from the revelation of grace and mercy in Jesus, and from giving credit to it. Whoever honours its testimony as the truth of God, will be convinced that he, trusting to the atonement of Jesus, shall never perish, and trusting to the righteousness of Jesus, shall have everlasting life. Hence come joy and peace in believing. The conscience is reconciled to God, and is at peace. The heart is made sensible of the love of God, and rejoices in him. This was the experience of the sweet singer of Israel in the 33rd Psalm: "Our heart shall rejoice in the Lord, BECAUSE we have trusted in his holy name." This is a good reason. Whoever trusts in God will certainly rejoice in God: for by trusting in his word, and by depending upon his faithfulness, he cannot be disappointed of the good things which God has promised. We have an instance of this in a trembling, despairing sinner, who had drawn his dagger, and was plunging it into his heart. In that moment he heard of Jesus. It was given him to feel his want of a Saviour. Sirs, says he to Paul and Silas, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe *in the name of* the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they preached unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and REJOICED, BELIEVING. Oh what a happy change was here, and made by believing! The self-murderer forgets his bloody design, and drops his dagger: hears of a pardon, and believes. His black despair gives way to sweet peace in God. His misery ends in the knowledge of a joyful salvation. How blessed are they that believe! God has pronounced them, and God will make them, blessed. There is no misery deserved, but by faith they are saved from it; and no good promised, but by faith they may now enjoy it. They have therefore all the reason to rejoice that any person can have on this side of heaven: for,

Thirdly, This joy is distinguished from the vain joy of the world by its author. It is the gift of God. It is one of the graces of the Spirit of God. St. Paul says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy," &c.—love to God, and then rejoicing in God. When the Spirit of adoption enters into any heart, he manifests by believing the love of the Father, and thereby excites it into holy joy. He comes to make the soul happy in its return to God. It is the very end for which he is sent from the Father and the Son, and therefore it is called the joy of the Holy Ghost. It is his fruit, produced by his influence, and kept by his power. It is like himself, of a spiritual and heavenly nature—a pure affection—in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. He refines it from creature-delight, and exalts it above sensual pleasure; for it is the result of nearness to God, and the effect of fellowship with him: which is,

Fourthly, another blessed ingredient in the joy of believers. It has God for its

object. It is joy in God as their God, their supreme good, known, believed in, and enjoyed. The Holy Spirit has consecrated their hearts for fellowship with him. He has brought a free pardon for past apostacy, and full power to dethrone creature-love. And he abides in their hearts to subdue it. He enlightens their understandings to see the vanity of the creature, and the fulness of God, and he enables them to reject every thing that promises them happiness, if they cannot enjoy God in it. Thus he keeps their hearts chaste, and fixed upon God. Their joy becomes simple, as their faith is: for this looks at the finished salvation, and, resting entirely upon it, sees God perfectly reconciled: thereby it lays a sure foundation for their joy in God; because they now know him by faith to be their God, and can see their interest in all the blessings of his love in Jesus. This is the fountain head of joy, from whence flow rivers of pleasure for evermore. The nearer they live to the fountain head, the more communion they have with God: their hearts become purer and holier, and their joys are more spiritual and heavenly.

This is the only remedy for the miseries with which the world abounds. Men are uneasy, seek for joy, and cannot find it, because they seek where it is not. They go to broken cisterns, which cannot hold it. They are disappointed, and wonder; but still go on, spending their days in this vain pursuit. They do not attain any true joy: it flies from them, and at last they lie down in sorrow. What thanks then, O my soul, art thou bound to return unto thy God who has saved thee from this delusion! What a mercy it is that thou hast been led to the fountain of joy! Oh, live near it; and from it derive all thy streams. Seek them all in God, and seek them in faith, upon the warrant of the divine promise. He has said, "The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord: they shall have it and increase it." The more meek and lowly thou art, the more wilt thou be joyful in God. Pray, then, for growing humility, that thou mayest experience the sweetness of this Scripture—"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice"—there is always a matter of joy in the Lord. What a fulness did he find who testifies of it thus—"My joy shall be in the Lord—God is the gladness of my joy—all my springs are in thee—for thou art my exceeding joy." Happy prince! All his springs came from God, and led him to God. He did not draw his happiness from the brooks, but from the fountain. The brooks dry up, but the fountain cannot. He did not rejoice in his crown and dignity, in his victories and treasures, or in any worldly good. He enjoyed God in them, who was the joy of his heart. He only valued the gifts for the sake of the giver: for he made use of them by faith; and then they were the means of bringing him near to God, and of keeping up communion with God. Whatever does this, is a great blessing: and every thing should do this to a believer. While he lives like a child of God, he exercises his faith for spirituals and temporals; and his heavenly Father blesses him according to his word, wherein he hath caused him to put his trust, and gives him continual matter for joy and thankfulness.

This is the portion of the Lord's people. He has entailed it on them. It comes to them by inheritance. And thou art bound, O my soul, to make use of it. Thy duty and interest call upon thee to enjoy much of it. Thy gratitude for the exceeding great mercies of the Father's love cannot be so properly shown as by rejoicing in him; for the thankful heart cannot but be joyful. It feels happy in God. My meditation of him, says a grateful soul, shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord. This is a just tribute, which the Father expects, and which the Holy Spirit enables his children to return him. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: IN THY NAME shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." These are great privileges, which God has promised and does bestow upon his people. It is true they do not all alike rejoice with great joy; but they all ought. When their faith is weak, their joy is little. But they have the same right to believe, and to rejoice in believing. There is the same provision made for the whole family and household of faith. They are interested in the same covenant, have the same promises, and the same faithfulness to make them good. They have perfect security given them, that they may trust and not be afraid. The people who know the joyful sound of a free grace sal-

vation have good reason to believe without doubt or wavering. By such a faith they will see God perfectly reconciled to them, and will behold the light of his countenance shining on them in love. A blessed sight! to see it clearly is glory begun; to walk in it is glory increasing. What is it but heaven, to rejoice all the day long! But then it must be IN THY NAME, in the incarnate word, in Jehovah Jesus; by faith in whose righteousness they shall be exalted, as high as a creature can be—being justified freely and fully they have access into this perfect grace wherein they stand, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but they rejoice in the way to glory, in tribulations also, knowing that all things are working together for their present and for their eternal enjoyment of God.

For their encouragement thus to rejoice in the Lord, he has promised them that the joy which he gives shall not be taken away, which is

Fifthly, Another great privilege. True joy is the gift of God. Is a grace of the Spirit of God. It has God for its author, and God for its object: and it has this prerogative annexed to it, that no one can destroy this gift of grace. The Lord Christ declares that he will not suffer any creature to take away what he bestows. What a rich cordial was this to his dejected apostles! They were mourning upon account of his leaving them, and were sadly cast down, as men without hope. But he revives their drooping hearts with a promise—"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh from you." This is indeed strong consolation: for it is one of the streams which maketh glad the city of God—a stream that never fails. it runs out of the ocean of free grace; and none can stop its running back into it. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you, says Jesus. The world giveth empty joys, continueth them by an uncertain tenure, at last takes away all its gifts, and leaves its deluded votary to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire: whereas Christ gives what is truly good, solid and lasting. His gifts are without repentance. He is of one mind in continuing, as well as in giving; for his motives are in and of himself, and always the same. His own mere love, his free grace, and the good pleasure of his own will, dispose him to give and to continue his favours; and his one end is his own glory. Therefore he will not take away the joy which he has given, and he will suffer no one to take it away. He secures by his power what he gives by his love. Such is the believer's right to rejoice in the Lord always. His title is indefeasible. God has freely given him in Christ all the good that can make him happy: and he enjoys it, and is happy, so far as he lives by faith. While he goes on from faith to faith, his joys increase. Growing faith brings him in a richer harvest of joy: and he is commanded still to proceed, until his joy be full; which is a

Sixth privilege, peculiar to joy in God. Other springs fail: they are often dry: and when they run the fullest, he that drinks of their water thirsts the more. But joy in God has a satisfying fulness. The fountain is always full, yea, is always running over; and all the streams bring happy peace, and holy joy. The more a man drinks thereof, the more sober and spiritual he becomes; for whatever flows out of this fountain is grace, sanctifying grace: the more we partake of it, we grow more like it. There is in it the divine property of conforming and assimilating us to itself; for it weakens the corruption of nature, and strengthens the faculties of the new man; and as these grow stronger, they cleave closer to God, and have more fellowship with him. By which means they partake more of his joy. A happy partaker of it declares—"In thy presence is the fulness of joy." And therefore he prays—"Make me full of joy with thy countenance"—the presence of God with me, and his loving countenance shining upon me, is the fullest joy upon earth. And this comes from the grace of the Holy Spirit, and is received by faith. Our Lord says to his disciples—"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." His end in speaking was to give them good reason to rejoice, and to continue rejoicing; and if they received what he spake with full assurance, as they ought to do, it would produce in them a fulness of joy. And this would be so much to his honour and to their profit, that he commands them to ask it of the Father in his name—"Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy

may be full." To the same purpose the apostle John, treating of the person of God incarnate, through whom we have fellowship with the Father, in all the blessings of his love, says, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." His design in writing was to lead them to nearer fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and to stir them up to seek in it their fulness of joy: and they have it full who, satisfied of their title to the Father's blessings, are receiving them freely out of the Son's fulness by the grace of the Spirit. It becometh them well to rejoice; for in the same blessings there is fulness of joy for evermore—joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Put all these considerations together, and then see, O my soul, what a rich provision thy God has made for the joy of thy heart. Admire and adore him for his great salvation, for delivering thee from sin and sorrow, and for the free gift of righteousness and life eternal. To pardon, to justify, to glorify such a one as thou art, oh, what divine and infinite grace! What wilt thou return him for manifesting his love to thee, and for engaging thy love to him? How great is thy debt for admitting thee to fellowship with him, as thy God and Father, and for the gracious communications of his love to thee in Jesus! What a subject is here before thee for delightful praise! Look at it in any true light; thou hast reason to be glad with exceeding great joy. God, the infinite fountain of good, is thy God. He rejoices in thee; therefore thou shouldest rejoice in him. He has loved thee freely. How canst thou be sensible of this without loving him? His love has blessed thee with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Whilst thou art receiving them out of his fulness, how canst thou refuse to thank him with joyful lips? He says that he rejoices over thee to do thee good: the belief of this should fill thy heart with joy and gladness. Indeed, there is nothing in God but what should be to thee matter of rejoicing. His faithfulness and justice are on thy side, as well as his never-failing compassions; for he is thy God, thy covenant God; he has given his Son for thee and his Spirit to thee: by his grace thou hast been called to enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son, and to partake of their covenant blessings. It is thy privilege to be improving this fellowship, and even upon earth to be tasting of the joys of heaven. May thy faith bring thee in a rich feast, yea, a fulness of joy, till thy cup run over with the rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore.

Remember, O my soul, it is thy duty and thy privilege thus to rejoice in God. It is thine interest and thy happiness. Thy God requires it of thee as the grateful acknowledgment of his favours: they are all of grace, inestimably rich and everlasting. He would have thee to honour him for the gifts by rejoicing in the giver. Joy is the sense of his goodness to thee. And canst thou receive the present, and live in hopes of the eternal blessings of his goodness, and yet be without a joyful sense of them? Examine well, and try thyself. How is thy heart? Is it happy in God? Is it happy in nothing but God? Whatever a man puts his trust in, from that he expects his happiness. In what then dost thou trust? Certainly thou wilt say, my trust is in the mercy of God for ever and ever. And should not he be the only matter of thy joy, who is the only ground of thy faith? If he be, then why art thou so often cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? How many dejections, what great sorrows, and what frequent heaviness dost thou experience! From whence come they? Joy is sown for thee. The sower is the Son of man. The Father has promised it, and bestowed it on thee for thy portion: thou hast been called by grace, and the joy in believing is thy birthright. What is the reason thou art not happy in thy God, and rejoicing in him always? Search diligently for the cause. Depend upon it, there is a great mistake somewhere. The Scriptures cannot be broken, which treat of continual joy in God. The promises cannot fail: the promiser is faithful: and yet thou art not always a partaker of the promised grace. How is this? Oh, try to come to the bottom of this error. May the spirit of wisdom lay it open to thee, and may thy sorrow be turned into joy.

Perhaps thou art seeking for some reason to rejoice in thyself. This rejoicing is not good, although it be very common. It has a bad motive: it comes from

pride. The end is bad: it is to exalt and aggrandize SELF, which was man's sin and ruin. It is forbidden in Scripture—He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord. If thou couldst find something in thyself to be pleased with, thou wouldst then rejoice in thy pride. Sorrow for not finding it may bring thee right; because it may be the means of showing thee that thou hast nothing of thine own to look at with self-complacency. What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why wouldst thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? Hast thou any thing of thine own but sin? Who gave thee grace, and made thee to differ from others? Was it not God? Did not all come from the good pleasure of his own will? He saw nothing good in thee at first to move him to be gracious; and what he continues is to the praise of the glory of his own grace. If thou hast lost the sight of these truths, no wonder thou shouldst go mourning. God will not vouchsafe his joy to them who sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag. He humbles and fills the humble with good things, but he sendeth the rich empty away. The rich rob him of his glory, and he refuses them his grace. Watch, therefore, over thy proud legal heart. Be jealous over it with a godly jealousy; and entreat the Holy Spirit to bring down every high thought in it, that thou mayest exalt God, and he may exalt thee. Remember the promise—"The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord:" seek ye the fulfilling of this: for joy in him is the death of self-seeking and self-pleasing. Oh, beg of God then to keep thee meek and lowly, that thou mayest be willing to live upon Jesus by faith, and to receive all the joy of his fulness of joy.

Perhaps thou art mourning under a sense of thy sinful nature, and groaning under the burden of indwelling sin, as holy Paul did, and as all the dear children of God do, when they are in their right mind. This is godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. It is the true poverty of spirit, to which the Lord hath promised his blessing. Indeed, every one that has it, is blessed; because it is not only consistent with the truest joy, but also is the very proper temper of mind, in which it is preserved and increased. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Self-knowledge is the breaking up of the fallow ground, and is the ploughing and harrowing of it; thereby making it fit for the good seed, and to receive the enlivening influence of the heavens. The more any man knows of himself, the greater reason will he have to seek the harvest of his joys in God; and, seeking by faith, he will find them. If he be in the deepest humiliation, he will be then best disposed to rejoice in God. This holy joy generally rises highest when self is lowest; as the highest tide is always after the lowest ebb. Remember this, O my soul, in the most abasing views of thy fallen nature, and it will lead thee to seek, and in believing to find, that in God which thou hast not in thyself. The empty, and none but the empty, may be filled with his joy. Let every discovery of thine emptiness lead thee to trust more in the salvation of God, and to enjoy more of its blessings. And then thou mayest be, with Paul, always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. Sorrow for self is the greatest friend to joy in God. Self-loathing is accompanied with the sweetest delight in God. May the apostle's experience herein be thine—"We are of the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." O pray for the same grace, and thou wilt find that the less confidence there is in the flesh, the more rejoicing there will be in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps thou hast been tempted to feel for joy in some creature-comfort, and hast not received it as the gift of God, nor enjoyed it by faith, nor returned him his glory. Thou wast looking below God for happiness, and expecting it from some other object. The world had herein ensnared thy heart. There is not a greater enemy to the children of God; because it has objects suited to their senses, and capable of gratifying them; by which the world is always trying to engage their affections, and always succeeds, when they are not living by the faith of the Son of God; for this is the only victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. See, whether thy sorrow did not spring from some worldly disappointment. Thou hadst dropped thy shield, and wast falling asleep in Delilah's lap; but, awaking, didst find the pleasure turned into pain. This pain

may be very profitable. It should convince thee of thy dreadful mistake in leaving God for the world, and should stop up thy way for the future. Now thou seest the need of being cautioned—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: for all things, out of Christ, are under the curse: there can be no blessedness in them. The whole world lieth in wickedness; it cannot make thee happy, any more than hell can. But it is thy privilege to be delivered from this present evil world, and to be saved from the love of it. This is a blessed part of thy salvation. Expect it by faith. The victory is obtained; seek thy share in it. "I have overcome the world," says Jesus. Almighty Lord, overcome it in me, as thou hast overcome it for me.

But remember, O my soul, whatever be the real cause of thy sorrowing, there is joy in God, and for thee; because he is thy God; in whom there is nothing to make thee sorrowful, but every thing which can possibly give thee true joy. The blessed Trinity are in covenant for thee and for thy salvation. And it is thy bounden duty, trusting to the finished work of the Son, to rejoice in the love of the Father. In the peace of thy conscience, and in the love of thy heart, thou art required to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and to be always giving thanks to the Holy Spirit for this fellowship. Every enjoyment of their covenant blessings in earth is a foretaste of heaven, and a pledge of joy unspeakable. What thou hast now by faith, thou shalt certainly have in everlasting possession: for there is a sure foundation laid in the covenant for thee to build thy hopes upon of rejoicing evermore. Thy Father has chosen thee and accepted thee in his Son. He has set his heart upon doing thee good, and he changeth not. His loving kindness is like himself. He has drawn thee by his Spirit to believe in his love, and he has promised to love thee unto the end. He has freely given thee all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and he reserves the full enjoyment of them for heaven. Nothing can rob thee of them; because he keeps them by his power for thee, and thee for them. How should this help to fill up the measure of thy joys! The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, is thine, with all that his love can do to make thee happy. What canst thou want, but more faith? The Lord increase it, that thy heart and conversation may be more with him. As thine affections are set more on things above, the temptations to the love of the things below will be weakened. The sweetness of heavenly communion will deaden thee to the charms of the world; yea, the world will be to thee as nothing, while God is ALL. And is he not all in all to thee? Consider his nature, his personality, his covenant, his works, his graces and his blessings—view them in their greatness and goodness—thou hast an interest in them all. His wisdom contrives for thee—his providence watches over thee—his love waits to be gracious to thee—his holiness and justice and truth are thy friends—all his attributes have engaged his power to bring thee to glory. The perfect salvation of Jesus is thine. His Father is thy Father in him, and has nothing in his heart but love to thee. The Holy Spirit has manifested it to thee in believing to be a perfect, unchangeable, and everlasting love. Whatever the Godhead has promised to give of happiness, is promised to thee: and thou dost believe it, although thou art sometimes in heaviness through manifold temptations. But even then there is joy laid up for thee in God: joy enough in the fountain. It is always full: only thy faith draws out of it sparingly. Enough in God to turn thy sorrow into joy, if faith did its perfect work. Oh for more faith, that thou mayst have more joy in believing.

From whatever cause, then, O my soul, thy sorrow arose, it certainly did not spring from any thing which faith discovered to be in God. Be assured of this: and learn to improve thy sorrow about other things, so as to see thy need of trusting more and of rejoicing more in God. If thy sorrow be lawful, coming from a sight and sense of thy sinfulness, there is good reason thou shouldst abhor thyself and repent in dust and ashes: but this is also good reason for joy in thy God; because the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. He gives to them the knowledge of salvation, and makes them glad with the joy of his countenance. Thus he delivers them from their sins and sorrows. He continues his loving kindness·

surely his goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their lives! When they are under temptations to seek for joy in other things, he hedges up their way, that they cannot attain the expected good; or if they do, he embitters the enjoyment, and will not let them find any thing in the creature, but vanity and vexation: by which means he would teach them to derive all their joys from him, and from nothing but him. Wait, O my soul, and read, and hear, and pray; be diligent in all means for thine improvement in this divine lesson. Seek the presence of God, wherever thou art. Expect his blessing upon all that thou doest. Account his love thy chief happiness; and be sure, nothing can make thee happy in which thou canst not enjoy his love. If riches increase, the world smiles; health be granted thee, relations are kind, and all things go well: set not thy heart upon them. Look at the bountiful hand which gives, and depend on the grace which sanctifies those things. They are not worth having, but as they come from and lead to God, and so may be spiritually improved. If thou canst live by faith, and enjoy God in them, then they are real blessings; for then thou wilt receive them as his gifts, and use them to his praise; thou wilt eye his goodness in them, and admire him for them. And while he continues them, thou wilt be dependent on his grace to keep thy heart from idolatry, that thou mayst love the gifts only for the sake of the giver. Whatever thou art going to do, ask thyself—How can this be the means of my rejoicing in God? If it cannot, avoid it. If it come with all the world's flatteries, and make thee the greatest offers of joy, fly from it. There is deadly poison under its gilded outside. Lay it down as an invariable rule of thy walk, that nothing can do thee good but what thou canst enjoy God in. He is the only source of good: and every thing is to thee what he makes it; not what it is in itself: as such, all is vanity. But it is good when God makes it so. True joy is from him, and in him. It is the gift of his grace, and does not stop at any of the streams, but goes up to the fountain head, from whence they flow, and there finds its comforts. O my God! teach me thus to seek my joys in thee, and to make thee my crown of rejoicing.

For thine encouragement, consider, O my soul, what he did to the travellers gone before thee in the way to Sion; how he comforted them and made them glad with the joy of his countenance. He led them indeed through the valley of Baca, of mourning—the only highway to the kingdom; but they found a well in it—a fountain of living waters: they went on sorrowing for their departure from God, but were made glad at their hearts in being brought back by his grace: therefore they wept, rejoicing. Happy mourners! And hast thou not the same reason as they had to sorrow for thyself, and yet to be exceeding glad in God? Is not this also the case with all thy fellow travellers now upon the road? Their hearts are with God. He is their portion. His heaven is their home. They would not make up their happiness in the accommodations by the way, but in God, their treasure, their supreme good, and their everlasting joy. Neither would they be stopped by the inconveniences which they may meet with: these, improved by faith, will tend to make them long more to be at home for these will lead them to feel more of the true joy there is in God, and will thereby inspire them with higher strains of praise and thankfulness: so that every thing they meet with on the road will be sanctified to them, and will dispose them to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Their Father and our Father, out of the riches of his grace, has not only given them matter of thanks, but has also provided the very words to be used by them. Many a weary traveller has found them a rich cordial. His spirits have been raised, his soul and all within made happy, while he was singing the sweet and heavenly hymn. The gospel prophet, who had seen the glory of Immanuel, and who was the honoured penman of this divine poem, has left us a direction, when any one has a right to sing it, and to make it his own, Isaiah xii. 1. *And in that day thou shalt say.* By looking at the context the time here mentioned appears to be the day of the Lord's power, and when the Spirit of life enters into the sinner, and he is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins. A happy, eternally happy day. The same Spirit will be his comforter, will bring him to the knowledge of his salvation through faith in the gloriously complete work of Immanuel, by which he shall find himself freed from guilt and fear, and

in Jesus made a partaker of grace and glory. Then the joy of the Holy Ghost is felt in his soul, and his heart is in tune to bless the Lord his God—*O Lord I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me; thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation: therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* These wells are the fountains of grace, from which the heavenly travellers draw their holy comforts, and with which refreshed they go on from strength to strength, praising Jehovah and ascribing to him all the glory of their salvation. He was angry with them, and justly. The fire of his wrath might have burnt to the lowest hell; and his law, his justice, his holiness, and his truth, would have been glorified for ever in their destruction. But, admired be his mercy, adored be his sovereign grace, he himself found out a way to magnify every divine attribute in their salvation. This was the wonderful contrivance of the Three in covenant. The Father accepted his coequal Son in the place of his people, and his obedience unto death in their stead: he is now perfectly reconciled unto them in Jesus: his anger is turned away from them. And when it is given unto them to know it: and they receive the comfort of it, when they have joy and peace in believing, oh what a day of light and glory then breaks in upon their souls!—a day sometimes clouded with the rising mists and vapours of the body of sin, but often so bright and serene, that the warm beams of the sun of righteousness shine directly into their hearts. These are times of great refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The communications of his love are then felt with pure delight: and the soul is made sensible that it is in Jesus a happy partaker of the fulness of joy. The man cannot contain his mighty bliss; but breaks out aloud into thanks, and calls upon the bystanders to admire the marvellous goodness of God. *Behold!* see here a miracle of grace!—*God is my salvation*—wonder with me at the exceeding riches of this love—Why me! What am I, that the most high God should be my Saviour? I am sure he never set his love upon one more unworthy, nor plucked any brand out of the burning that was fitter fuel for hell fire. O help me then, angels and men, to praise and adore that infinite mercy, which contrived, wrought out, and has now applied to me this salvation with all its blessings. My debt increases, and I want to praise him more: for in that unspeakable gift of his Son he gave me all things, and he has now given me faith, and has put me into possession. I have his word for it, and I believe it—a word of infallible truth, confirmed by promise, ratified by the covenant oath of the blessed Trinity. These engagements cannot be broken, therefore *I will trust and not be afraid.* On the part of the divine covenanters all is sure. They have given me the fullest security that can be; and I may take the comfort of it. They will never leave me nor forsake me, and my faith shall not fail. Blessed promise! I shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Glory be to the *Lord Jehovah, who is my strength*—his almighty arm holds me up, and therefore *he is my song*—the same arm will carry me safe to the end; therefore my heart rejoiced in him, and with my song will I praise him. I will make my boast of his strength: all the day long will I be telling of his salvation. How can I mention too often these infinite mercies of my God? I love to dwell on the delightful theme. It warms my heart, it inflames mine affections, and raises my soul to heaven. My joys are all in this one—*He also is become my salvation.* He is my present salvation; for he has opened the fountain, and has opened my heart to receive the life-giving streams. How can I but bless and adore his holy name, while I am *with joy drawing water out of the wells of salvation?*

O ye blessed of the Lord, who have received the same salvation out of the infinite fountain of divine grace, assist me to praise. Your rejoicing with me will increase my joys, and improve my thankfulness. So it follows in the prophet—*In that day shall YE say*—YE, not one only as before; but the many partakers of the same mercies will sing in chorus. They will join in social worship, and with one heart unite in the common tribute of praise. *Praise ye the Lord; call upon his name; declare his doings among the people; make mention*

that his name is exalted: sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Sion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. Great he is indeed, infinitely—everlastingly great in himself—and to be admired for his excellent greatness in saving sinners. This is his greatest work, and it demands of them their highest praise; and they are glad to give it him. Happy are they now, when, humble and poor in spirit, they can exalt their Saviour God: but who can tell how happy they shall be, when he shall exalt them and make them partakers of his own happiness! Eternal salvation will demand the tribute of their eternal praise; and they will be most blessedly employed in paying it when they shall return to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Crowned heads may well sing: for their coronation day will last for ever, and the king of kings will put such honour upon his royal friends, that all heaven will ring with his praises. They will with one heart and one voice adore God the Lamb; whose gracious hand wiped away all tears from their eyes, and made sorrow and sighing flee away for ever; and who gave them his joy and gladness, such as are even in heaven inexpressible, and will be to eternity full of glory!

O my God! accept of my poor mite. I desire to join all the redeemed in earth and heaven in blessing and praising thee at all times. I would give thee praise continually with my heart and with my mouth: I would rejoice in thee, and in nothing but thee; for thou art my God, my supreme good, and mine everlasting portion. Let me then, for thy mercies' sake, glory in praising thee henceforth and for ever. I ascribe it to thee now with a glad heart, rejoicing in hope that my praise will be better ere long, and never ceasing. Thou art worthy of all that angels and men can pay: to thee, holy Father, with the Son and Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah, be equal and endless praise. To this I give my hearty *Amen.*

CHAPTER VIII.

The Believer walks humbly with God, bearing his cross.

The happy believer is now advanced a great way in his journey. He has been brought to the saving knowledge of God—has received faith in his reconciled God in Jesus—has been taught by the Spirit to love his God—and has found the blessedness of holy communion with him in the way of obedience and duty, which makes him go on rejoicing; then it is become fit and proper that his faith and love should be tried. He must expect it. It is to the honour of God, to the good of others, and to the establishing of those graces, that proof should be made of them, and that they should be put, like gold, into the furnace. This is only a refiner's fire. If the furnace be very hot, one seven times more than it was wont to be heated, the gold will lose nothing. Sterling grace is purer and brighter for every fiery trial. Its enemies, who blow the flame, have no intention to refine it, and sometimes the believer himself cannot see how the means will answer the end: but God overrules every trial for his glory and the believer's good, and makes it more precious than that of gold which perisheth. Troubles, opposition from within and from without, all the difficulties he can meet with, only serve to purge out his dross, and to render him more fit for his heavenly walk. Herein the grace of God is most marvellous. Such a power as brought light out of darkness, is continually directing and sanctifying the crosses of the believer, so that not one of them can stop him; nay, the greatest of them help him forward in his journey, and bring him not only more safely, but also more happily, to the end of it. Adored for ever be the Father's love, which makes all things work together for his children's good.

When man was in paradise, there was nothing in him but what was conformed to the image of God. His will was one with the will of God. In this state there was no cross. Harmony ruled in the innocent breast; and God looked on his favourite man with delight. They were perfectly agreed; and they walked together in holy and happy friendship. But when man fell, then sin brought in sorrow, in the ten thousand miseries which the body suffers, and in the entire corruption of the faculties of the soul, particularly of the will, now at enmity with the will of God. Hence our crosses. Sin is their fruitful parent; and while we are in a body of sin and death, we cannot be exempt from suffering; for man is born to trouble, as naturally as the sparks fly upwards: but the unregenerate man does not feel the cause of this. He has no spiritual senses. He is dead to God. He does not know why he suffers, and he is not sensible of what he deserves to suffer; therefore he goes on merrily, laughing and singing under a load of guilt enough to ruin a thousand worlds. But when the spirit of life enters into him, and he is made to see his state, to feel his guilt, and to fear his danger, then he begins to groan under the cross. Every day he discovers how totally he had fallen, and departed in heart from the living God. He now tastes the bitterness of sin, and finds the deadly fruits of it. Although there be a remedy provided to bring the wanderers home, and he is made acquainted with it, yet he is without strength to apply it. He cannot by believing take the comfort of it. When it is given him to believe, he still has sin and suffering to exercise his faith. Against his corruptions and temptations he must be continually fighting the good fight of faith. From this warfare he can have no discharge but by death. He must take to himself the whole armour of God, and be under arms night and day, or he will never be able to resist the assaults of evil spirits, or to overcome the opposition of evil men. This is the heritage of all the servants of the Lord. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If they be on the Lord's side, all his enemies will certainly be theirs; so that if they enter into his kingdom, it must be through much tribulation. The King himself went this way to the crown, bearing his cross; and he has assured us there is no other way—"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, CANNOT be my disciple"—he must deny himself what by nature he loves, and must love what by nature he hates: unless he live in this state of self-denial, which is to be his daily cross, he cannot live in communion with me, as one of my disciples. If he be one of the highest of them, yet he must carry his cross; for he has still a fallen nature, and its senses and appetites are always lusting against the will of God; and it is like plucking out a right eye to deny them their gratifications, and to refuse them their much coveted pleasures. He is in a body of sin and death, and must carry his cross to his grave, being liable to all the sufferings which mortality is heir to, and all the way mortified under them, because he cannot bear them without faith, nor hold out without patience; and these graces are not of himself, but are the gift of God. He is also forced to carry another cross all his days, even the corruption of his nature, depraved in every faculty, and always inclined to evil. This is the burden and grief of the children of God, under which they all groan. And a sore and heavy burden it is, heavier for being continual, and for its always working against the grace and glory of the Lord Christ: for this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, and appears in nothing more than in their adulterous love to their own righteousness, of which they are so dotingly fond, that, after the Holy Spirit has divorced them from it, and their Maker is become their husband, even the Lord their RIGHTEOUSNESS, yet still an unlawful attachment to their own righteousness remains, and is the cause of the greatest crosses and of the heaviest trials they meet with in their way to heaven.

Hence the cross becomes necessary for the whole nature of fallen man, for body and soul. The sensual appetites are continually seeking their gratification in unlawful things, and the spiritual faculties are full of blind pride, and self-righteousness, and know no way to the divine favour but by their own works and goodness. The cross is indispensably needful to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and to crucify the vanity of the mind, that, when it would glory,

it would have nothing left to glory in but the Lord. In this light let us consider the infinite love, which appointed the outward cross for the outward man, and the inward cross for the inward man; and let us see, how by each of them communion with God is preserved, and the believer is helped forward in his blessed journey.

CHAPTER IX.

The believer exercised with the outward cross, carries it with patience, and finds it a great help to him in his walk heavenwards.

We call that a cross which opposes our will. This opposition renders it painful and grievous. A very little matter, the least trifle, becomes a great cross when our will is set much against it. How, then, can the believer rejoice with a heavy cross upon his back? or how can he rejoice all his days if he must carry it to his grave? The blessed gospel discovers how this may be, and the blessed Spirit gives the experience of it; for he continues to teach the doctrines of grace, and under the cross he enforces them. What has been treated of in the former chapters, he now applies with life and power. The doctrines are put to the trial, and it appears that they are of God: for none could produce the effects which follow upon believing them, but an almighty arm. Faith is tried in the fire, and the believer is convinced it is in the faith of God's elect: for the promise is made good—"When thou walkest through the very fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." His love to his reconciled God is put into the fiery furnace, and it comes out, like the three children, sensible their God had been with them in the furnace, and their God had brought them out; for which marvellous instances of his love to them, their love was increased to him. This is God's way. He gives grace, and then tries it. When he has enabled the sinner by believing to find peace and love, then he would improve those graces by daily exercise; and if the exercise of them be very sharp and afflicting, it is only to establish the trust of his heart, and to confirm the affection of his soul more perfectly in his God. His God. Mind that. His God still. The cross is not sent to weaken that relation. He is the same tender Father to his children, when he puts it upon them, as when he takes it off: and he would have them by faith to experience it. While they depend on his being perfectly reconciled to them through the obedience and sacrifice of Immanuel, they will see the same paternal affection invariably set upon them, and always disposed to do them good. His love changeth not. The happy objects of it have given this glorious testimony, even when under his cross—"We know that all things work together for good"—they found it so. Whatever he sent to them came with a message of his love. "Hear ye the rod, and him that sent it." They hear what he says by it, for it speaks of the Father's love; and the belief of this quiets their minds under the stroke of his rod. Thus it answers his purpose—This cometh not forth of the dust, but is appointed for me: my Father sent it, not in anger for the punishment of my sins, but in the tenderness of his affection.—He is not dealing with me as the supreme disposer of all events, who may afflict, and justly, his rebel creatures according to his sovereign will; but he has sent me this affliction with a message of grace and peace—I know it is well ordered—I kiss the rod, and I bless him that sent it.

The apostle Paul uses this argument to the suffering Hebrews. They had endured a long and great fight of afflictions. They had need of patience: he therefore gives them in the 11th chapter a short history of the Lord's favourites, and shows that they all carried his cross, and that he supported them all under it; yea gave them strength to run their race, till every one of them won the prize: then he requires them to look to Jesus, the greatest sufferer, out of whose fulness

they might receive faith to run, and patience happily to finish the same race. And, lest they should be weary through suffering long, or faint in their minds under hard suffering, he reminds them of the character of their heavenly Father, who out of the tenderest love appointed their crosses:—"Have ye forgotten the exhortation," says the apostle, "in which your Father speaketh unto you as unto children? My SON, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof ALL are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Oh what a blessed exhortation! How full of love—the love of God the Father—love to his child, who wants correction—love that would not touch him with the rod till he had most tenderly informed him of his gracious purpose: My SON, my beloved, this chastening is from thy Father. It was determined for thee by covenant love, and settled upon thee for thy portion in the great charter of heaven. All thy crosses were then mercifully appointed—their weight and measure—how long—how great—how many—what strength was needful to bear them—what comforts under them—and what holy fruits should be produced by them—all was fixed by love, is now given in love, and is to bring thee to greater enjoyment of my love. My dear child, despise not then my chastening, nor faint when I rebuke thee. Be assured it is for thy good. There is a *needs must*. It is so necessary, that I cannot love thee without chastening thee, nor receive thee among mine adopted without scourging thee. See, then, how thou takest my correction. Look at thy temper and behaviour under it. Examine. Art thou patient? Not suffering merely, but suffering quietly is the proof of thine adoption—If ye ENDURE chastening—If, when I afflict, thou canst possess thy soul in patience under mine afflicting hand, then I deal with thee as with sons—I give thee thy portion of suffering, and I give thee thy portion of grace to bear it. All my children want correcting, and they all have it: for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? They are all sufferers. Mine only-begotten was the greatest. None of you can suffer as he did: but whoever is following him must share with him in his cross, and bear it after him. If any be without my chastisement, whereof all mine are partakers; if they cannot bear it, have not faith to receive my loving correction, and therefore no patience to wait the blessed issue of it, such do not belong to my family; they are none of mine; they are bastards, and not sons.

How should the argument in this scripture reconcile the believer to suffering! How easy, yea, how happy, should it make him under the cross! He suffers, but it is from his Father, who in most perfect love and infinite wisdom appointed the cross, and appointed also the precious fruits, which it should produce. O my soul! keep this in mind. Remember whose cross thou art carrying. Thy Father contrived it. He sent and continues it, that it may work under him for the best. It is the chastening of his richest love. Receive it then patiently, thankfully at his hands, and thou wilt find it full of blessings. But take heed how thou consultest sense or carnal reason. These are always enemies to the cross: for they judge of it only by feeling, and always refuse to believe what God says concerning it. Adhere to the truth; and reject every suggestion, which would insinuate to thee, that there is any thing but love in the chastening of the Lord. He is thy Father. He never loves thee more than when he chastens thee. There is no hatred in his heart—no vengeance in his hand. He assures thee of this, from the infallible word of his mouth. Here may thy faith be settled: believe in him—he is doing thee good—he is promoting thy best interest. Cast not away this confidence, and then the cross will be the means of bringing thee to the nearest and holiest communion which thou canst have with thy Father on this side heaven.

In this amiable light look upon thy Father and thy friend. Never forget it, O my soul! but keep it in the faith of thy heart, especially when he chasteneth thee. Then expect from his love patience under his stroke, and after it the peaceable fruits of righteousness. These will grow abundantly upon the cross. They grow no where else so rich and ripe. Survey the promises, which he has

made to his suffering children, and wait in faith for a joyful harvest. In due season thou shalt reap, if thou faint not. And the cross is intended to keep thee from fainting; because thy Father sends it for the increase and for the strengthening of thy faith. Read and study what he says to thee upon this point. Learn and inwardly digest it. In time of trouble thou wilt find great comfort from depending upon the promise of the Father to give thee a happy issue. Meditate, then, upon the scriptures, in which he has declared his gracious purposes in afflicting his children, namely,

First, it is for the trial of faith. God gives it, and then tries it, that it may appear to be his grace, that men may see it, and honour him for it, and that it may grow by use, which is as necessary to spiritual, as exercise is to bodily growth. Trial shows the truth, and brings forth the power of grace, and is thereby a matter of great joy; as the apostle James testifies, writing to the twelve tribes in their dispersion and affliction: "My brethren, count it ALL JOY, when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience: but let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing." God be thanked for this word of strong consolation. What a precious scripture is it! How full of encouragement to the believer to look with delight at *temptations!*—not temptations to sin, but trials, sent from God to keep from sin. When he falls into them by providence, and meets them in the way of duty, then he should judge of them, not from sense, which can feel nothing but sorrow in afflictions, but he should take account of them from the declared purpose of God in sending them, and he should wait in faith for the blessings which they are to produce. God says, that they are matter of joy, of ALL JOY, of all true spiritual joy—they are not only such in his account, but he also makes them such to the believer. Accordingly we read in scripture of many who did rejoice in trials. The Hebrews did: for they took JOYFULLY the spoiling of their goods. Paul did: I am comforted, says he, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations. Nay, he went farther—We GLORY in tribulations. He leaped with joy with the cross upon his back. He boasted and triumphed under it. What the world accounted his worst, he made his very crown of rejoicing; for he knew and found that the trial of faith worketh patience: faith receives the cross from the Father's love, and learns to bear it after Jesus: by the grace of the Spirit, the bearing of it, as it exercises, so it improves patience. The believer becomes more acquainted with it. Use, we say, makes perfect. He learns where the strength to bear is—from whence his comforts are to flow—and from whose hand the blessed issue is to be received. He waits therefore with sweet submission to his Father's will, that patience may have its perfect work, that by trials it may be exercised, by sharper trials it may be improved, and by daily trials it may appear to be the genuine grace of the Spirit, perfect and entire, lacking nothing. This the believer aims at. He would have every thing that belongs to true patience, and growth in it; he would have it refined by every fiery trial, and made purer and brighter, that it may hold out, till it have done its perfect work. The apostle Peter gives the same encouragement to the same afflicted Hebrews: he exhorts them to faith and patience under their sufferings in these words: "Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time; wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." What treasures of love are laid open in this scripture! Read, O my soul! and adore the exceeding riches of thy Father's grace. He knew how needful afflictions were, both for the flesh and for the spirit, and therefore he appointed thee thy portion, and he has in mercy informed thee of his design in them. He has revealed his will for the ground of thy faith, that what he sends them, thou mightest experience the blessings promised to his suffering children. The belief of his love in contriving and in proportioning them to the ability given thee to bear them would administer matter of joy in sorrow, and by trusting to his faithfulness thou wouldst greatly rejoice; thy joy would so far exceed thy sorrow. The heaviness is but for a season—the joy for

ever. The heaviness only during the trial of faith—the joy increased by that very trial. The trial was only to prove the truth of faith, and to evidence the power of it—not to weaken, but to strengthen it—not to destroy, but to refine it. The refiner does not intend to lose one atom of his gold, but puts it into the fire to purge away the dross. So does God. When he hath tried me, says Job, I shall come forth as gold. He was tried in the fire, and his faith was found unto praise and honour and glory. Therefore he is set forth for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we account them happy, not who suffer, but who endure suffering. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord abounds in compassion, and is of tender mercy. O my soul! wait upon the same Lord, and he will bring all thy trials to the same blessed end. He has the same pity and mercy to thee as he had to Job. Thou hast the same reason to believe it, as he had. Thy faith is tried in the fire, as he was, that it may come out of it like gold. The trial was appointed in perfect love, and is to produce the greatest blessings of love. Thy God has most gracious designs towards thee in putting thee into the fire. It is to try thy faith; whether thou canst trust him there. It is to improve thy faith by the trial, that thou mayest trust him more. If thou hast trusting faith, it is to teach thee patient faith. It is a hard lesson to learn to trust against sense and carnal reason, and to say, This cross is good for me: I desire to submit, and to take it patiently at the hand of God. O, it is very hard to believe that there is nothing but love in every suffering, and it is harder to find it so, while suffering. And yet the Spirit of God declares there is nothing but love in it, and by believing thou wilt certainly find it. May every trial of thy faith establish it, and thereby bring forth,

Secondly, the blessed fruit of patience. The cross does good to faith; because by it God teaches his children to bear up, and to hold out, trusting to his promises, and waiting in hope for his fulfilling them, and thus it exercises patience. Which is a grace of the Spirit, learned only in the school of Christ, and therefore the giver of it among his other high titles is called *the God of patience.* He first enables his afflicted children to believe what he has said of his love in afflicting them, and then to wait for the experience of his love under their affliction. Thus waiting quietly, without giving way to sense, or unbelief, is patience. Faith is tried, and stands the trial. Tribulation comes, faith is exercised with it, but holds fast its confidence in the word of God, and thereby has full proof of the faithfulness of God. This worketh patience—a quiet submission to the divine will—and a holy subjection to the divine rod. The flesh murmurs, self-will repines, self-indulgence rebels; but faith looks up for the promised strength, and by it conquers them. It stops their mouths with a Hush—be still and know that he is God—he is my sovereign and my Father—this affliction indeed is not for the present joyous, but rather grievous—nevertheless it comes from his love, love guides his hand, love will bring good out of it—O that all within me may submit to his will, and bless his name!

But the cross is hard and painful: flesh and blood cannot bear it. True; but grace can. To endure is the proper work of patience. It endures by trusting to the word of God, and by receiving from him the promised strength. What cannot such a grace endure? When God says, "Fear not, I will be with thee, when thou goest through the fire;" the believer is hereby forewarned of the fire; and when he is called to go through it, he expects the presence of his God, that if the bush burn, it may not be consumed. How comfortably does the apostle Peter speak of this to the suffering Hebrews! "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing had come unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." He would have them to be accustomed to the cross, it being the only way to the crown. There is nothing new or strange in it. All the crowned heads in heaven carried it, while they were upon earth; yea the king of saints went bearing it before them. There never was sorrow like unto his sorrow: and yet for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame. Take up thy cross, O my soul! and follow him. Look unto Jesus. He will give thee

strength. He has taken the curse and wrath out of thy suffering. Thou wilt see it the fruit of his love to thee, and it will be the means of engaging thy love to him. What if it be a burning fiery furnace: is it not almighty love which calls thee to go into it? Not to hurt thee, but to try thee, to give thee happy proof of the soundness of thy faith, and of the power of thy patience. He would would have thee to know that thy patience trusting to his tried word is invincible; that no blow can beat it, no fire can burn it: from Christ. He would bring to experience what the prophet did, when he said, "Thy word is tried to the uttermost, and thy servant loveth it." The good word of God was tried, as far as it could be, and the trial proved its truth, and therefore he had fresh reason to love it. The trial increased his confidence in the truth, and his experience in the sweetness of its promises; thereby his patience was confirmed, and he could rejoice, inasmuch as he was a partaker of Christ's sufferings, both of their infinite sufficiency, and also of their mighty efficacy to save. By enjoying these blessings under the cross, his heart was happy in the joy set before him. He had the earnest and the foretaste of heaven: for he knew that, when the glory of Jesus should be revealed, he should be glad with exceeding joy.

But the carnal mind is ready to complain—This would be true, if the suffering was short; but it is long, as well as hard—I have borne up a great while, but now my patience is quite tired out—I am ready to give all up, being weary of my life with the length of my trials. How many have I known in this melancholy case! Fair blossoms in the mild and gentle spring. In fine weather and smiling sunshine they looked beautiful, and gave hopes of their being in the tree of life, and of their growing and ripening upon it. But, alas! a trying time came, a bleak cold north wind, and a very sharp piercing frost—like leaves in autumn, down fell the promising bloom. My heart has mourned again and again at the fall of one and another, and mourns while I am writing this, over several now living, who have forsaken God and his ways for the world and its delights. They met with trouble, and it was too much for them. They were tempted, and they had not strength to resist. The reason is thus assigned: "He that received seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." He is offended and falls away, because he had no root: and they who have root, are too often tempted to be offended at the cross. They find it very difficult to bear up under it. Natural infirmity, remaining corruption, and strength of temptation make pain and suffering grievous to the flesh: yea, when they are forced to bear the cross long, and it is very heavy, they are apt to murmur and fret, grow discontented, are tempted to unbelief, and, if they give way to it, to despair. How necessary is it, then, that they should be enabled to possess their souls in patience under their great and many trials! To which end nothing can contribute more effectually, than a settled faith in the word and promise of a reconciled God. This will stay and quiet the soul, when trouble comes. It is the chastening of my Lord, says the believer—my loving Father sends it for good. He is only trying my faith and patience, and the trial will end well—it is grievous indeed at present, and I go on my way weeping, but I have my supports now, and I shall soon reap a joyful harvest. I have a faithful promise for it, which is a constant cordial, and keeps up my spirits. My God will be with me as long as the trial lasts—he says he will. I believe him, and therefore expect his promised presence and strength, till faith and patience have their perfect work. Such a cordial the apostle James gives to the Hebrews. They wanted it much. They were greatly oppressed by the rich, and some of them were persecuted even unto death. "Be patient therefore, brethren," says he, "unto the coming of the Lord: behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain: be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." He puts great stress upon the Lord's coming: Yet a very little while and your Lord will come to appear for you: it is true you are in a fiery trial, but your God calls you to it; and it may seem to you a long trial, but he has promised you grace sufficient to bear it: trust him, then, and

he will keep you patient. He knows your frame and temper, and bids you look about you. See how the husbandman waits, having only a general promise, that seed time and harvest shall not fail; and it is not more reasonable that you should wait with patience the end of the Lord. He sows his seed and leaves it. It endures much hard weather, frost and snow, rough winds, and wintry storms. Summer comes, but he must still wait: his corn is in ear, yet is liable to suffer from long drought and from blights, and to be beat down with heavy thunder-showers; but he has long patience. At last he is not disappointed of his hope. He reaps the precious fruit of the earth, and gathers in his joyful harvest. Behold, O my soul! and imitate. How strong is his faith! Is thine like his? God has only said, that the seasons shall not fail: he has not said, that the harvest in every field and country shall not fail, yet the farmer sows in faith, and waits in patience. But the promise is sure to thee—"He that believeth shall never be confounded," and dost thou believe this with a hope that maketh not ashamed? He has long patience; how is thine? Art thou not weary and faint in thy mind, especially when the course of providence seems to run counter to thy hope? Canst thou hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him, when he chastises thee, and seems in anger to cast thee off? He waits long for an harvest of perishing things; and canst not thou wait to have thy fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life? Oh what need hast thou of patience! Seek it, pray for it, beg of thy God to establish thy heart, that thou mayst be rooted and grounded in faith: and if troubles come great and heavy, thou mayst possess thy soul in patience, so long as the Lord shall please to exercise thee with them. And never forget that he will certainly come, and quickly. Let this promise keep thee from fainting. He will come in with his supports; he will administer his comforts under the cross; he will remove it in due season. - What can be required for the establishing of thy heart, which is not promised to thee in this scripture? "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward: For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise: for it is but a very little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Wait then on the Lord, O my soul! be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: Wait, I say, on the Lord."

Perhaps thou art ready to reply—I have waited long, but am still to learn: for my trials are so various, that as soon as I have been well exercised with one sort, presently it is changed, and another comes, to which I was not accustomed —And this continually, like Job's messengers, one after another, and still the last brings a sadder message than the former. Hard and long trials I have endured, but this constant change of them wearies me out; they come so unexpected, they find me so unprepared, they so harass my troubled mind, that I am ready to sink under them—frequently I am tempted to think, that if God loved me, he would not delight in afflicting me in this manner.

Thus the carnal mind is apt to reason against God and his ways: but when the believer goes into the sanctuary and consults the oracle, he receives an answer of grace and peace, and is satisfied that this change of trials is nothing new with God. It is his usual method of training up his children in faith and patience. He appoints troubles for the exercise, and all sorts of troubles for the improvement of their graces. The Captain of their salvation was made perfect through sufferings: So are all the soldiers of Christ Jesus. It was the remark of one of his champions.—MANY are the troubles of the righteous. The apostle James speaking of the persecuted Hebrews, says they had DIVERS temptations, different one from another: and his brother Peter tries to comfort them under their MANIFOLD afflictions, many in number, succeeding as fast as wave follows after wave, and of many kinds; some distressed them in their bodies, others in their minds, in their character, in their substance, in their families, in every way that affliction could be felt. Patience is the grace suited to all these trials; because it bears them in the strength of God: for it consists in trusting to his sure word of promise, and believing it against sense and feeling, Faith says, this present trial comes from the love of my covenant God: Patience says, then I will bear it, till he bring it to a good issue. Whatever the trial be, patience has

the same promise, and the same promise-keeping God to trust in. If he send variety of trials, it is only to give a variety of proofs that he is faithful who hath promised. He knows we have divers diseases, which must have divers remedies to heal them. We have manifold evils in us, which require manifold afflictions to subdue them. And our God intends to give us many blessings, and he appoints many troubles to bring us to the enjoyment of them. All these are gracious dispensations, mercifully contrived, and seasonably administered, that patience may learn to bear, and may learn to persevere in bearing. God changes the trial. Patience has a new lesson, and a new opportunity of improvement. A good teacher brings his scholars forward; and when they are gone through one book and are well grounded in it, then he advances them to another: when they have learned Latin, he puts them into Greek; but he does not change their studies out of ill-will or hatred to his scholars. They had rather be at play, than minding their books; and they had rather get but one lesson, and be saying it over from day to day; but the master knows what is best for them, and he keeps them to their work. God trains up his scholars in various exercises, but all for their improvement. He does not consult what would please them, but he changes the lesson, as he sees needful. He knows when their faith wants confirming, when their patience needs establishing, and therefore in much mercy he sends a new trial for the growth of those graces. Lest they should mistake his meaning in varying trials so often, he gives them this general rule—"There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The Father will exercise his children with no trial, but such as is common to man; and he will enable them to bear it; and will make a way for them to escape. How should these considerations silence their murmurings! If the trial be new to them, yet it is common to man. If it be hard to bear, yet grace is almighty to strengthen patience. If it last long, yet it shall end well. How convincing are these reasons! How patiently should believers, influenced by them, submit to the chastening of the Lord! And yet there is still unbelief in them, which will be urging fresh complaints, and stirring up impatience.

The poor sufferer, feeling his smart, is apt to think—Any cross but mine would be tolerable—I should not say one word against God, if he tried me with any other: but this cuts me to the heart—Oh, it is a very agony both to my flesh and spirit—there is nothing like it—it is so exactly calculated to cross my temper, to hurt me in the tenderest part, and to rob me of my most beloved gratification, that it is the very thing in the world, from which I could have wished to be exempted—Any cross, Lord, but this.

Nay but, O man! who art thou that repliest thus against God? Hold thy tongue as it were with a bridle. Let not self-will murmur, and folly speak against the chastening of the Lord. He says that he is dealing with thee as with sons. Where is thy faith then, that sense and feeling should be permitted to plead, and to be heard against the witness of God in his word? Where is thy patience, that thou canst not bear the present cross, but wouldst take up any other? Alas! alas! mistaken man—what canst thou bear in thine own strength? Thou feelest the smart of thy present cross, and it makes thee peevish and fretful: the smart of any other would have the very same effect. A less than this, the least thing in the world, that opposes thy will, would stir up thine impatience. Observe thy temper, how it catches fire at any little opposition from men. The same temper will be inflamed and rage, when God chastises thee, if thou refuse to receive his correction. Thy rebel will is the cause of thy pain, and makes thy cross so bitter: For if God's will and thine were one, there could be no cross; but his will is almighty, and yet thou resistest it. God puts his yoke upon thee, and thou art like a stubborn beast, which only hurts and galls itself by striving and kicking against its work. He tries thee with one cross, and thou art dissatisfied; thou couldst contrive a better for thyself. Thou wouldst be thine own lord and governor. Self-will, they say, is a sure guide to self-destruction. Beware, then, of thine own will. When God calls thee to take up any cross, do not wish for another. He sends this, and to it he

requires thy submission. It is thy duty, and thine interest to receive it, for the exercise and for the improvement of thy patience; but instead of taking it up quietly, and waiting for the good fruit of it, thou art quarrelling with it, and opposing the will of God. Oh, take heed of this vain attempt. It is a snare laid for thee; a fatal trap, into which the love of independence, seduced the first man, and which ever since easily ensnares his posterity. When thou art tempted to murmur at thy present cross—consider what it is—meditate a moment upon thy Father's love, who most mercifully appointed, who most seasonably sent it—and if it be nothing strange, but common to man, then do not try to shift it off, but seek the promised grace to bear it. There is not a cross that he will lay upon thee, but he has laid it before upon others, and it will tend greatly to the peace of thy mind, and to the restraining of thine own will, to observe how he dealt with them. Take notice, then, how he in love exercised them with every cross that can be laid upon thee, how he supported them under it, and what blessed fruit they reaped from it.

This is the kingdom of the cross; and it is the Lord's will that every disciple in it should be as his master. He has chosen them to suffer with him, as well as to reign with him. And therefore, intending to call forth his gifts and graces into daily exercise, he has honoured them with the daily cross. He sees it needful often to change it, and he has informed them of his gracious designs herein. There is scarce any kind of suffering, but some or other of his people have been tried with it, and he has left promises in scripture of his support, of his coming in with comfort, and in due time with deliverance. So that, whatever thy cross be, it is not sent, O my soul! to hinder, but to promote communion with thy God, and to help thee forward in the heavenly way.

Art thou pinched with poverty—a believer, but in distressed circumstances? Blessed art thou of the Lord. "Hearken, my beloved brother, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?" What a mercy is it to have thine outward estate thus appointed for thee by the choice of thy heavenly Father! And the same estate which he chose for his best beloved. In the exceeding riches of his love he decreed that thou shouldst be poor in this world, as Jesus was.—He knew it was best for thee—and he chose thee rich in faith—outward poverty was to be the means of thine improvement in spiritual riches—thy want of temporals was to bring thee to live more by faith upon eternal things. Oh, how good is thy God! He sent thee poverty to enrich thee. It is to bring thee near to God, to keep thee near to him, and to afford thee daily proof of his precious love. These are some of the blessings of rich faith, and these are worth more than all the treasures of the world. Be content then—thy God will supply all thy need. Be thankful thou art an heir of the kingdom. Bless thy God—no creature out of heaven has more reason to bless him than thou hast—He is thine—All things are thine.

Perhaps thou art tried with bodily pain and sickness: These are hard trials To endure them is the very crown of patience: but strength to endure them is promised, and in waiting upon the Lord will be received; so that outward pains shall produce inward joy. Thus we read: "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." He is weak; God strengthens him. He is sick; God comforts him. He is in pain; God smooths his bed, and he lies patient. Sickness cannot be pleasant in itself; but is profitable for its fruits. It is the appointment of God, and teaches submission to his sovereign will. It comes to the believer with a message of precious love—This bitter cup is sent from thy heavenly Father, who has many gracious purposes to answer by thy taking it—He would humble thee, and let thee feel what thou art, and what thou deservest—he would mortify the life of sense—He would give occasion to increase faith and to advance patience—Drink it up!—There is a rich cordial at the bottom—The taste of it will draw out thy heart in love to God. Happy sickness! which promotes spiritual health. Blessed pain! which the kind physician often makes the way to pleasure, yea, to the sweetest communications of his love.

Art thou in the fire of persecution? Are thy friends and relations all in arms against thee for leaving them to follow Christ? Is thy dependence upon them, and art thou greatly tempted to make some compliances, lest they should cast thee out, and thou shouldst come to poverty? This may be a fiery trial; but it is a blessed one. He will make it so, who says, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: because great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you." This persecution will be so far from stopping thee in thy way, that it will both help thee forward, and will also make thy journey pleasant. Thy friends revile thee: look up to him, who when he was reviled, reviled not again: he will turn their reproach into a blessing. They persecute thee: the goodly fellowship of the prophets carried the same cross, and found it no hinderance to their spiritual joy. They say all manner of evil of thee: take heed that they say it falsely, and for Christ's sake; and if thou suffer for him, and art evil spoken of for thine attachment to him, then rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is thy reward in heaven. Thou art a sufferer with him, and thou shalt also reign with him. Look forward to the promised kingdom. Expect it in faith, and the prospect will give thee at every step joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Perhaps this persecution may be carried on to acts of injustice, even to the depriving thee of thy property: thou mayst suffer the loss of all thy worldly goods for Christ's sake. When God calls thee to this trial, he will give thee strength to bear it, and thou shalt be a great gainer by thy loss. So Paul found it—"I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung that I may win Christ." So it was with the Hebrews—"They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." What love was here! God was their portion, and their great reward. He had made them happy in the sense of his love; and to manifest the reality, and to demonstrate the power of it, what great things love can do for his name's sake, he took away all their earthly delights. Let them go, says Paul; I part with them as freely, as I would with so much dung; for I have experienced that the loss of them has brought me to nearer fellowship with my precious, most precious Jesus. Happy parting! say the Hebrews; farewell goods and chattels—we rejoice at the spoiling of our goods; because we have got faster hold of the substance by the loss of the shadow—outward comforts are gone, but inwardly, rich supply their place—we are robbed of our earthly possessions, thank God we cannot be robbed of our better and enduring substance; for it is reserved in heaven for us, where no moth or rust can corrupt, and where no thieves can break through or steal: in this faith we find our hearts free and light and happy in running the race that is set before us.

Thy trial may be something still nearer. It may be the loss of thy dearest relations. The wife of thy bosom is taken from thee. Thy favourite child is dead, perhaps drowned, or burned, or killed at a stroke: the delight of thine eyes is gone, and thine heart is ready to break. All sorrow is not forbidden, but sorrowing even as others who have no hope. Tears may flow; but Christian hope keeps them within their proper bounds: it restrains and sanctifies them. Thy wife is dead: thy child is dead. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. He requires thee to forsake loving wife and children, be they ever so dear, if love of them cannot be enjoyed without forfeiting his love. "And there were great multitudes with Christ, and he turned and said unto them, if any man come unto me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple." The disciple gives up himself to the master's disposal, to learn of him, to believe in him and to love him. "My son," says he, "give me thy heart." He has a right to it; and he will admit of no rival. It is his temple and his throne, in which he alone will be worshipped and honoured. He is a jealous God, and if any love hinder love to him, it must be torn from the heart. O disciple! read this scripture; study it carefully; and it may be the means of showing thee the true cause of thy great sorrow about worldly relations: it is because thou hast so little love to thy best

relation and friend, Jesus Christ. If thy love to him was what it should be, thy heart would not be so grieved at those losses; but would in patient submission acknowledge—It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.

Perhaps thou art mourning for the loss of living friends. They have forsaken thee. Old connexions, as dear to thee as thine own soul, are broken. Persons, whom thou hadst known from thy childhood, and with whom thou hadst grown up in strict friendship, are now thine enemies, and become so without any offence or fault of thine. They hate thee because thou art a real Christian, and their hatred is harder to bear because the world joins them in it, and thy name is every where cast out with contempt.

It must be so. The decree cannot be altered—I WILL PUT enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. God put it, and put it for ever. The enmity broke out as soon as there were two born into the world. Cain hated Abel, and slew him. Ever since, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit. There has been one, and but one perfect man upon the earth since the fall; and the enmity of the world followed him unto death. Lest we should marvel at its following us, he has forewarned us—"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you: if ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." What a strange reason is this! Because I love you, therefore the world hates you. What God chooses, the world rejects. Why then, O my soul, dost thou court its smiles or fear its frowns? The world, which lieth in wickedness, cannot love thee, and its enmity cannot hurt thee. Remember the words of Jesus—"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace: in the world ye SHALL have tribulation; but be of good courage; I have overcome the world." I have overcome it for you, and I will overcome it in you: tribulation from it shall not hurt your peace in me, but shall increase it: I will make my love the sweeter for its enmity: troubles from it shall be well repaid with my joys: and when it quite casts you out, then will I take you into my bosom, and let you know what the affection of the heavenly bridegroom is.

Why then, O my soul, art thou afraid of such an exchange? Is it not for thy profit to part with the world for Christ, and to give up its joys for his? What greater gain canst thou expect than to win Christ, and by him to be crucified to this present evil world? Dying to it, thou wilt be more alive to him, and therefore happier in him. As other ties are dissolved, thy heart will be knit closer to thy divine lover. Warmed with his precious love, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under thy feet" thou wilt hasten thy steps heavenwards; yea, thou wilt be ready to take wings, and to fly to the embraces of thy dear, ever infinitely dear Jesus. Thou wilt want no comment upon the words of the bride, the Lamb's wife, but will gladly use them after her—"Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."

In former ages the children of God were often deprived of their liberty, cast into prisons, and bound in chains. This seems to us a heavy cross. To be shut up in a dark dungeon, put into fetters, and deprived of every worldly comfort, requires great patience: but even this did not stop them in their way to heaven, nor in the enjoyment of God by the way. Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, oftens mentions it among his highest honours, that he was accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. He and Silas were cruelly beaten with many stripes at Philippi; were put into the inner prison, and their feet fastened in the stocks; but the Lord was with them, and he turned their prison into a paradise; his joy made them forget their wounds and pains: for at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and SANG PRAISES unto God. This has often been the case since their time: the Lord has often visited his prisoners, and the light of his countenance has made them happy in their bonds. Indeed we are not called to this kind of suffering at present—thanks be to his grace! This is a day of such uncommon mercies, that we have more to fear from our want of thankfulness than from our want of liberty. I pray God we may not grow licentious, and abuse our great privileges, but may he

enable us so to value them and live up to them, that he may be honoured for continuing them to us and our posterity.

In former times, also, believers were often forced to seal the testimony of Jesus with their blood. And even this did not stop them in their walk, nor hinder their communion with God. Hear one of his martyrs—"The Holy Ghost witnesseth that bonds and afflictions wait for me in every city: but none of these things move me, neither account I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." This was not a vain brag. He spake it in humble faith, depending upon his master's promise that he would stand by him when his blood should be shed, and would make him a happy conqueror in the hour of death. And he was more than conqueror; but the grace which made him so was not peculiar to, or the privilege of, an apostle: the same was given to a noble army of martyrs, who overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. What a triumph of patience was this! They were enabled to bear any thing, even the loss of life, rather than suffer the loss of their Lord's favour. Examine, O my soul, whether thy faith be like theirs. Canst thou endure as they did? How is thy patience under the cross? Read what they went through, who are well reported of by the Holy Ghost for their faith, and remember the same grace is promised to thee to carry thee patiently through all thy sufferings.—"They had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth, and these all obtained a good report through faith." They are celebrated by the Holy Spirit for having patiently endured till they had run their race, and finished their course with joy. He sets their example before thee, that thou shouldst not be slothful in running the same race, but a follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Meditate seriously, O my soul, and reflect again and again upon the great need thou hast of patience. Remember, the cross lies in thy way to the crown, and thou canst not avoid it. The Lord has appointed it to be thy portion, and it is entailed upon thee as much as the kingdom is. When he exercises and tries thee with it, he does not act merely as a sovereign, but as a Father. He deals with thee as with sons. His children want, and his children have correction. None are without it. But they find it hard to bear. The will of the flesh is impatient under the cross. Self-love hates it. Carnal reason cannot be reconciled to it If it be thus with sons, what must it be with bastards? The natural man, when he is brought into great trouble, is like a mad beast. If his pains be sharp and acute, he rages, storms, and blasphemes: if they be also lasting, having no God to go to, he often gives way to despair, and despatches himself with a pistol, running to hell for relief. O my soul, marvel not at this. If God had left thee to thyself, the same trials might have brought thee to the same unhappy end. How necessary then is patience! Without it thou canst not bear the cross, nor hold on thy way under it, nor profit from it. And how necessary are the doctrines before insisted on for the practice of patience! No one can submit to bear the cross unless he be first persuaded that God is reconciled to him and loves him in his Son. When he is satisfied of this, he will see all things (the cross among the rest) well ordered for him in the covenant, and all working together for the best. The cross is mercifully sent to make a trial of these doctrines: by it God would manifest the truth and bring forth the power of them, that it may appear they were not learned, as notions, but experienced by his almighty grace. His end is answered. The trial of faith establishes the peace of God in the conscience, and confirms the love of God in the heart, and thereby keeps patience waiting for strength to hold out, and for a blessed issue. The believer, made strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, endures patiently. He knows from whom his cross comes. It is the appointment of his Father, who does not send it in hatred. He never afflicts his children but in perfect love. He never puts a heavy cross upon them to break the back of their patience, but to strengthen it,

and to train them up to bear greater burdens. He would teach them their weakness and his strength, their wants and their supplies: he would call forth their faith for the honour of his word, and their patience for the glory of his faithfulness. Lord, teach me these lessons! I want the experience of them every day. O my God, make me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. There only can I learn to suffer thy will: to thee I come for this grace. Assist me, O thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in reading thy word, that, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, I may have hope. Enable me to meditate night and day on the doctrines of grace revealed in them, and to mix faith with them, that I may be strong in the patience of hope. O merciful God and Father! I desire to be strengthened mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man to bear thy cross. I would live in a continual dependence upon thine arm to carry me through every trial. O thou God of patience and consolation, enable me to bear thy cross daily to the praise of the glory of thy grace, and to bear it patiently to the end, that I may finish my course with joy. Be it unto thy servant according to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. *Amen*, so be it Lord, *Amen*.

To receive benefit from afflictions is a great blessing. To suffer them with a resigned will, yea, to rejoice in them, as if all the joy in the world was to come to us, is contrary to sense and feeling; to carnal reason and to human philosophy; therefore our heavenly Father has graciously informed his children of his love in afflicting them. These informations are the ground of their faith, and were given to silence murmuring in their hearts, and to keep them waiting patiently for the promised fruits of suffering. Among which this is a

Third, and not the least; namely, the crucifying of the flesh, and the deadening of it in those affections and lusts which, if not daily mortified, would stop the believer in his walk, and would hinder his holy communion with God. When faith has been tried, and is come out of the fire, proved to be the faith of God's elect; and when patience has gone through the fiery furnace and has found no harm; then it is the Father's will to advance and to improve his children in the doctrine of the cross. They have a carnal mind still, which is enmity against God—a body of sin—an old man of sin—the flesh in them lusting against the spirit. This their fleshly nature, which doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, is the greatest enemy to their holy walk with God in constant peace and growing love; because it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The life of sense in them is always opposing the life of God. Hence the continual war between nature and grace, which if a man does not find in himself, he may depend on it he either never was alive to God, or else at that time he is dead to God. If he be living by the faith of the Son of God, he will also be fighting the good fight of faith against all the enemies of his salvation. He will never think of putting off the whole armour of God until he put off the body of sin and of death: and until that day come, he will be striving for the mastery over his body, that he may keep it under, and bring it into subjection. How absolutely necessary this striving is, appears from the tender compassion of our God and Father, who has appointed and decreed in covenant love all the crosses which were to be laid upon our rebel nature, and which were to be kept upon it, till death. It is his holy will hereby to restrain its affections, to mortify its lust, to hedge up its way by thorns and afflictions; and by these means he would weaken its power. Is not this mercy unspeakable? And what more likely method could he contrive, thus to crucify the flesh, than to put it and to keep it upon the cross? For as the sinful nature is deadened, the new man is renewed day by day. The one grows more alive by the mortification of the other. The subduing of unbelief, pride, and self-seeking, is the strengthening of faith, humility, and glorifying God. This command therefore is frequently given to believers—Put off the old man—put on the new—mortify your members which are upon the earth—crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. And this is spoken to believers high in grace, as high as ever any went, or can go. The Spirit of God says to the SAINTS at Rome—"Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." The infallible Spirit speaks to the SAINTS at Ephesus—"Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the

deceitful lusts; and put on the new man." The same precept is given by the same Spirit to the SAINTS at Colosse—"Mortify your members which are upon the earth." This is a holy war; and all the saints of God are engaged in it. They are fighting against every thing sinful, but more particularly watching under arms against their own corrupt nature, which is their hardest warfare, because there is no release from it, and it is carried on by continual self-denial, by resisting the affections and lusts of the old man, and by opposing his giving up the members of his body as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. But as good soldiers of Christ Jesus they resist unto blood, striving against sin. The Captain of their salvation is always on their side to encourage them with his promises, and to help them with his strength. He intends to lead them on conquering and to conquer, therefore he lays the cross upon their corruptions, as the most effectual means of subduing them; and to reconcile them to it, he speaks unto them, as unto children—

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. I do not afflict thee in hatred, but in covenant love. My design is to mortify the body of sin, and therefore I give thee this wholesome physic. Thou hast many bad humours and corruptions, for which I have appointed this sovereign medicine. Trust my skill—believe my love—depend upon mine arm—and thou wilt infallibly find it profitable to the spirit, however painful to the flesh. Wait; and the end shall be blessed.

To this truth the prophet Isaiah bears a clear testimony. He explains the Lord's design in afflicting his people, and tells them, it was to purge them from their iniquity, to keep them from the love of sin, and to restrain the practice of it. He afflicted them in mercy: but he afflicted their enemies in justice. Hath he smitten Israel as he smote those that smote him? No, he has not. Or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? No: he chastises his in love; he has appointed the measure, the time, the degree of their correction. "In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind: by this (moderate affliction) therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin"—to keep him back from sin in general, and from the sin of idolatry in particular, as it follows in the prophet—"When he maketh all the stones of the altar like chalk-stones that are beaten in sunder, then the groves and images shall not stand up." The altar, at which they offered their idol-worship, shall be broken down, like stones burnt in pieces for lime, and the groves and images shall not stand up, but shall be broken down also. These happy effects shall be brought about by sanctified affliction—iniquity shall be purged—sin shall be restrained—idolatry shall be thrown down. And God says, this shall be ALL the fruit and end of his chastening. He tells his people of his design, that they might know their affliction would bring forth good fruit, and that they might wait patiently for the fulfilling of his promise. Blessed are all they that wait for him; they shall never be disappointed of their hope.

How gracious is God in his dealings with his children! He provides the best for them, informs them of it, and because they have a fallen nature opposite to his holy mind and will, an enemy to his glory and to their own peace, he acquaints them with his design in subduing it. He appoints affliction for this end. It is the chastening of the Lord. He promises them strength to bear it, and comfort under it. Nothing but good shall flow from it. Iniquity, their worst enemy, shall be crucified; actual sin, springing from the iniquity of their nature, shall be mortified: the heart shall be deadened to its old idols, and as it dies to them it shall be happier in the love of God. O blessed cross! what mercies dost thou bring with thee! Is not that blessed indeed, which under God produces such unspeakable mercies? Take it up, then, O my soul, bear it patiently, and expect the choicest blessings of the Father's love from it. Why dost thou refuse? It is heavy. It is painful. True: but what makes it so? The burden is from thy rebel will. The pain comes from thy corruption, unwilling to be mortified. Take it up in faith, and thou wilt find strength enough to bear it, and blessings enough to make it a matter of all joy. Lord God, reconcile me to my daily cross. May thy will in it be done. Mortify sin, weaken its power, deaden its affections and lusts. Only Lord, whatever cross thou sendest, give grace with it, that I

may bear it patiently, and may wait for its promised fruit. Thou knowest what would stop me in my heavenly journey: if it be my bosom favourite, the dearest object of my love, O tear it from my heart! Thou hast given me a desire to have every rival dethroned. O come, and reign alone in me, almighty Jesus! and subdue whatever opposes thy lawful government. My Saviour and my God, make all within me feel the power of thy cross. Crucify the body of sin. Spare nothing that would hinder my walking with thee, or would deprive me of thy friendship and favours. I bless thee, I worship thee, I glorify thee for this infinite grace, that thou hast made me willing to have all mine idols pulled down. On thee I depend every moment for keeping them down. O my loving Jesus! carry on thy work, and in thine own way subdue sin in me: let me be planted together in the likeness of thy death, that I may be also in the likeness of thy resurrection—dead to sin, but alive to God. I ask this for thy great name's sake. Let it be thy good pleasure to hear and answer. I believe thou wilt. I have thy word for it. There I rest. *Amen* and *Amen*.

With this faith review thy mercies. Consider, O my soul, what a good God has done for thee, and what greater things he has still in store. He has in some measure reconciled thee to his cross. Thou art convinced it is thy Father's appointment, contrived for the best by his infinite love, and settled on thee for thy richest portion in time. He sends it for the trial of thy faith, that it may be found unto praise and honour and glory for the exercise and for the improvement of thy patience—for the mortifying of the body of sin, and for the deadening of the life of sense. This is the will of thy most loving and tender Father. He sends the cross to be the means of these blessings. Certainly, then, it cannot hinder thy walk with him, but in all these respects will tend to keep thee in the way, and to help thee forward in it, and thus

Fourthly, It will assist and promote thy holy fellowship and communion with God. This is the principal thing in religion. We fell from God by sin; and it is the greatest mercy to be brought back to him again. In this point all religions fail but the Christian. Christ is the way. No one cometh to the Father but by him; for there is salvation in no other. He only can forgive sin: he only can justify sinners. And this way was contrived in the covenant of the Trinity for the highest display of their divine perfections, which begin to be manifested when the Spirit of life enters into the sinner, and quickens him; when the Spirit of adoption enables him to trust in the atonement and obedience of Immanuel, and thereby to see God reconciled, and to call him, Abba, Father. With this faith in Jesus he expects from the Father's love all his promised mercies. Thus he has fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit. He stands related to the eternal Three in their covenant offices, and he receives freely in believing the covenant blessings of each.

Among these blessings the cross is not the least: for it is mercifully appointed to be the means of bringing sinners to this divine fellowship. They go on stubbornly after their own hearts, and in the error of their own ways until the Lord send some trouble to stop them. They look wishfully at the gilded cup of pleasure, and drink greedily of its sweets, without any fear of the deadly poison mixed up with it. But when God convinces of sin, then comes sorrow: they feel the poison working in a sense of guilt, and dread of punishment, which teach the want of a Saviour, and are a good schoolmaster, to bring them unto Christ. So God dealt with the chief of the Old Testament sinners—a giant in iniquity, who surpassed all that were before him in Jerusalem for idolatry and bloodshedding. The Lord sent his prophets to warn him of his guilt, but he would not hearken. He hardened his heart till the Lord brought upon him the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon: and when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom: then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God. His case was not singular. It is a common thing with the Lord to send affliction to make sin bitter, that he may lead his people to true sorrow for it, and that they may seek until they find salvation.

And when they have found it, he still uses the cross to keep them near unto himself. Indeed, the cross alone has not this effect, but rather the contrary. The natural man has his fretfulness stirred up by suffering, and cannot help murmuring at the will of God. But grace sanctifies suffering. God makes it a blessing to his children, as by it he exercises their faith in such general promises as these.

If God sent great and many troubles, they shall not separate believers from him; because he will then be with them; as he spake unto Israel—"Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt." It was the house of bondage, in which the taskmasters heavily afflicted his descendants with their burdens; but the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. So it was with the Israel of God. They need not fear any affliction; for their God has promised to be them in it, and by it to make them great Christians: the more they are afflicted, the more shall their graces multiply and grow—"I will be with thee in trouble, says God—I will redeem, I will save thee from all thy troubles—many are the troubles of the righteous; but I will deliver thee out of them all—yea, when thou passest through the water, and through the fire, I will be with thee, and will preserve thee from all evil—I will make all these things work together for thy good." These promises are a great support to faith: for God engages to be with his children in every affliction. He does not intend that any should separate them from him, but that all should keep them near to himself. He says he will be with them: they therefore expect his presence; and if their afflictions be very great, they may, on good grounds, wait for his time of deliverance. And as his word cannot be broken, their trust in it will be confirmed, and their hearts will be established in waiting upon the Lord. If their afflictions continue long, he is with them all the time, making them sensible of their own weakness, and putting forth his promised strength, both that they may endure, and may also persevere in enduring: thus he improves their patience. And because they have still a carnal nature, which cannot bear the cross, God therefore keeps it upon them, in order to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, that as they die unto sin they may live unto righteousness. Such is the declared purpose of God in afflicting his children: he would hereby cherish these graces in them, by which communion with him is kept up; and as these grow, communion with him will grow in proportion. Faith will look more at the truth, and live more upon the faithfulness of God. Patience will depend more on his arm, and the less happiness the believer can find in the creature, he will seek and will find the more in his God. The mortifying of the old man will of course make the new man more alive: for as the power of the cross of Christ is laid upon the former, the power of the life of Christ will be experienced in the latter.

But such is the goodness of God to his children under the cross, that he has given them several very particular and express promises, in order to strengthen their faith and patience. He has shown them what fellowship they are to expect with the eternal Three in their covenant offices; for promoting which he most mercifully provided the cross. O my soul! attend to this: carefully survey this rich contrivance of divine love, and when the cross is sent, take it up in faith, and expect to be a partaker of its covenant blessings.

Remember, it is laid upon thee to promote communion with thy God and Saviour. The appointed trial comes. It is to give thee proof of the soundness of thy faith in Jesus, and to let thee see by experience that thou hast not believed in vain. Thou hast fled to him for refuge, from sin and guilt, from wrath and hell: He took thee into his protection; and now thy safety in him is to be attacked. It will be seen that the foundation upon which thou standest will bear thee up in an hour of temptation. If thou hast indeed fellowship with him in his glorious salvation, it will now be made manifest to thy great profit. The cross is laid upon thee—a heavy, a bitter cross: it deprives thee of all sensible comfort, and is kept upon thee till thou hast no prospect of any. Hope in creature-comfort has failed. This is a sweet season for spiritual communion with thy Jesus. He has deadened the enjoyment of other things, that thy heart might be happier in him; therefore, now thou art to bring the principles laid down in the former chapters into practice. Here is a fair opportunity to make use of them; for

without them a man must sink under such a cross; but through faith in the righteousness of thy God and Saviour thou wilt not only have powerful arguments, but wilt also have powerful grace to bear thy sufferings, patient under them, and thankful for them:

Under them thou wilt be tried—Is it good ground, upon which I have built my hope of salvation? Is it the rock of ages? Does it bear me up safe, and keep me unshaken in this time of trouble? Yes; blessings, eternal blessings on my precious Jesus! I have fled to him for refuge, and he has set my feet upon a rock, that can never be moved: Christ, my passover, is sacrificed for me: in the blood of sprinkling I have put my trust, and I am safe from the destroyer: he is my propitiation, in whom I have redemption through faith in his blood: he is mine advocate also with the Father, standing in his presence as my surety: while the Father sees him and loves him, he will see me in him and love me with the same love: Jesus is mine atonement with him, my righteousness, and my sanctification, and my full redemption. O thou most lovely loving Jesus! I have often been happy in the sense of mine interest in thee, but never so happy as now. This cross is sanctified indeed; for it has removed what hindered my communion with thee, and has brought me to seek thy presence, and to enjoy thy supports, and thy comforts. I was foolish enough to wish it might pass from me; but this was mine infirmity. Pardon it, my sweet Jesus, and accept mine unfeigned thanks for thy late mercies. Never in my life did I find the virtue of thy sacrifice in the peace of my conscience, nor had I such intimate communion with thee in thy finished salvation as I have had under this cross. It tried me indeed; but the trial was to thy glory, and to my profit. I am now more satisfied than ever that thy salvation is infinitely perfect, and that I have my share in it: I have it indeed now; for I am a partaker of the things which accompany salvation. I am making use of them—I find their reality—I enjoy their sweetness—blessing and thanks and praise without ceasing be unto thee, my adorable God and Saviour.

Is it not, O my soul, thy fervent prayer that thou mayst live in holy friendship with Jesus? Why, then, dost thou fear his cross, which is his appointed way and means of improving thine intimacy with him, and likeness to him? Oh study the discovery of his love in the scriptures; and take particular notice of the promises which he has made to his suffering brethren. Read, mark them, mix faith with them, that they may be fulfilled in thine experience. Remember, thou canst not suffer but by his will, to which he expects submission: he sends the cross to teach thee this lesson. It cannot hurt thee if thou dost not quarrel with it; but if thy will be resigned to his, herein thou wilt have fellowship with him; and thou wilt have reason constantly to be praying to him—Not my will, Lord, but thine be done!

Consider, for the improvement of this fellowship, that thy Lord himself was exercised with the cross. He has gone before thee, bearing it. He has taken the curse and wrath out of it, and has sanctified it to all his followers. In faith they must take it up, and in patience carry it, or they will not come to the kingdom. Certainly, then, their crucified Lord will be with them; yea, he has promised—"I will be with thee in trouble"—seek his presence, O my soul, under the cross—wait for communion with him—he has said he will be with thee: expect therefore the light of his countenance, which is better than life. Do not fear the cross, since it is to bring thee such a blessing: it is to be the means of thy fellowship with Jesus in his sensible support, and heavenly comfort; take it up then. Suppose it removes all thine earthly joy; let it go: the pain of its loss is not to be compared with the joy of thy spirit. Jesus will give thee pure holy joy, and by his divine art will extract it out of pain. He afflicts, that he may comfort. He takes away sensual, that he may give spiritual pleasure. He removes creature-love, that he may communicate more of this happy love. In mercy he chastises. He sees there is need to mortify sin. He sends the cross for this purpose, and blesses what he sends. It works like wholesome physic. But, oh; it is bitter; it is nauseous to the taste. Why do you chew it then? Swallow the pill. The benefit is not to be found in the mouth, but in the stomach. There it will purge bad humours. The sovereign physician intends it should operate upon every evil temper, which would hinder your blessed communion with him, and

should be the means of exercising those graces by which that communion is maintained, and may be improved.

Such is the cross of Christ: taken up in faith, and carried in patience, it promotes daily fellowship with him; which is the greatest blessing upon earth: there is no greater in heaven; only, they enjoy it by sense, and we by faith: but we have the same fellowship with them in Jesus, and the same communion with them in the graces of his salvation. And for these he makes way by his cross. He deadens the soul to the life of sense, that it may feel more of happiness in him. When he has withdrawn other joys, he often shines into the heart with joy unspeakable. He generally vouchsafes these his love tokens to his suffering brethren, and gives his richest cordials in their deepest distress. Each of such happy souls can say—It is good for me to suffer with Jesus. Yes, Lord; I am thy witness: thy cross is good: it has been the means of my greatest good; for thou hast brought me by it forsake communion with other objects, and to enjoy communion with thee in thy precious love. If thou hast been pleased to take away any of my beloved objects, thou hast in much mercy supplied their place with thy presence. I have found my losses my chief gain. O my Jesus! Lord God almighty! I bless thee and adore thee for the distinguishing grace vouchsafed to me under the cross. It was entirely from thee, and the effect of thy love, that I had any patience or any fellowship with thee in the way of suffering. It was thy doing; and I glorify thee for enabling me to maintain peace with the Father through faith in thine obedience unto death, and for satisfying me that my crosses were appointed and sent by covenant love. Thou art the giver of these blessings; and on thee I wait for the continuance of them. Whatever thou callest upon me to suffer, order it and me as seemeth best to thy godly wisdom; but leave me not to myself. Be always with me, my good Lord! that I may bear thy cross, and carry it patiently and profitably; thou sustaining both me and it every step of my way to heaven. Hear me, my Jesus, and answer; for without thee I can do nothing; but strengthened by thee I shall be able to bear all things, and my daily cross will keep me in daily communion with thee to my profit and to thine eternal praise. *Amen.*

Thus the cross of Christ is sanctified, and keeps up communion with him in the blessings of his salvation: so it does with the Father in his love. In the covenant, his name is expressive of his office. He is a Father, who has every holy affection and feeling of love. He embraces in the bowels of the tenderest parent all his family—Christ the head, and all the members of his body, the church. With one undivided love his heart is set upon Christ and them. And with the same bountiful hand he blesses him and them. What Christ is, they shall be. In this most gracious relation he stands to the whole household of faith. He is their Father who loves and accepts them, pardons, justifies, sanctifies, and blesses them with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus.

It is hard to believe this under the cross. To cleave to him in love, as our Father, when his hand is lifted up to smite, yea, when we smart under his rod, then to see love in his heart and love guiding his hand, is faith very triumphant. We are apt to look upon our sufferings as coming from the wrath of God. We think he must be displeased, or else he would not delight to put us to pain: upon this account we are not reconciled to the cross, but would shake it off, if we could. The scripture give us a different view of this matter, and represents God in a more amiable light, even in the severest chastisement of his children. He is their Father, and they are his sons. This relation cannot subsist without his chastening them. He informs them of the necessity of it; he declares to them his purpose and grace before the chastening, and he assigns the motives and ends of his proceeding. He has always the same Father's love, and is always dealing with them as with sons. His cross is one of the chief marks of it. He sends it with a message of love, and it comes to them big with mercies. When the Father intends an abundant communication of his love, he generally makes way for it by some heavy cross; and when he would continue, or increase his favours, he keeps the cross upon them. It is his appointed means of promoting fellowship with him in the graces and blessings of his fatherly love; and it answers his end, when it is received by faith, and carried by patience; for then the believer, resting on the sure foundation laid for him in the holy life and death of

Immanuel, sees the Father reconciled, and expects every promised blessing from his love. Whatever cross comes, he receives it from his Father in Jesus. He holds fast this truth—God is my God—he loves me perfectly in his Son, and therefore I shall find some proof of his fatherly love in this affliction. But if his faith be weak, if he forget or forsake for a time his foundation, then the cross will become intolerable. Murmuring will arise. The flesh will hearken to unbelief. Fretfulness will take place, and thus God will be robbed of his glory, and the believer of his comfort. It has pleased God therefore, in order to strengthen his children's faith against these attacks, to give them many plain declarations of his invariable intention to do them good in all their afflictions. The Son is a witness for him: he was in the bosom of the Father, and knew all the purposes of his heart. He has given us a most delightful account of the Father's design in afflicting his children—"I am," says he to his disciples, "the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman: every branch that beareth not fruit in me, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, HE PURGETH IT, THAT IT MAY BRING FORTH MORE FRUIT." The Father looks upon all his children as one with Christ; as much united to him, and in him, as the branches are in the vine; therefore, as a wise husbandman, he takes the special charge and care of them. Every branch that does not bear fruit in Christ—it is not as we read it, every branch in me, but every branch that does not bear fruit in me—whatever it may seem to be—in profession a branch—in show a fruitful branch; yet it has no life: it was never cut off from the old dead stock, nor graffed into me, the life-giving vine. The husbandman knows this well. Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. He does this in an hour of trial. Then it appears that such branches were only in appearance united to the vine; for if he had made them part of it, he would no doubt have continued them in it; but he took them away, that they might be manifest that they were not one with the vine. This is a great part of the vine-dresser's business—he suffers no rotten branches upon his vine. He goes over his charge, and attends to every branch. If any seem to men or to themselves to be in the vine (for hypocrites are great self-deceivers, and the self-righteous love to be deceived, and proud nature is fond of growing into Christ by something of its own) the vine-dresser in due time discovers their mistake, and manifests to the world that they were not branches of his grafting; for he *taketh them away;* but every branch, says Christ, that beareth fruit by its communion with me he *purgeth:* by his divine husbandry, he removes every thing, which would stop its growth and hinder its fruitfulness. The branches of the vine are so weak, that they always want a prop—he supports them They often run very luxuriant—he cuts them with his pruning knife. They have many bad humours and juices in them—those he corrects. He purges every noxious quality, and whatever is contrary to the holy nature of the heavenly vine, he subdues. Most merciful is his purpose herein. He would have the branches of his own grafting to be lively and flourishing, like the stock upon which they grow. "I am the vine," says Christ; "ye are the branches." God's husbandry is to make the branches like the vine; therefore he purgeth them, in order *that they may bring forth much fruit.* And is this his design? Does he afflict them entirely for their good? Does he send every trial and trouble to purge their corruptions and to quicken their graces? Has the Lord Jesus given us such a pleasing view of his Father's love, assuring us that all crosses are sent by him to make us more lively and more fruitful? Since this is the case, what great reason hast thou, O my soul, to expect these blessings from the cross? Here is a promise for thy faith to rest on: a promise which discovers the heart of thy Father and his abundant love in afflicting thee. He would have thee not only to believe in his love, but also to enjoy it. He afflicts thee; but it is in order to thy keeping up communion with him under the cross; and he knows it is the best means of keeping it up and of promoting it. O seek then by faith for the promised fruit. Expect in patience the rich harvest. And that thou mayest quietly submit to the Father's will in purging them, as a branch, observe how exactly the apostle Paul agrees with his blessed Master—"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father

of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days corrected us, after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be PARTAKERS OF HIS HOLINESS." There is a reverence due to earthly parents; and children are required to submit to their correction; although herein they often consult their own will and pleasure more than their children's profit. And is not greater reverence due to the Father of our spirits? and shall not we submit to his corrections, especially since his design in them is to promote the greatest dignity and highest happiness of his children, even to make them partakers of his holiness? for to *partake* is not only to give them a title to, but also to give them possession of, to communicate, to have fellowship with him, to share with him, in his *holiness*. Holiness is the Father's image in his children, by which he makes them like him, and capable of enjoying him. He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy. He chose them in Christ, and made Christ their sanctification. In him they partake, as branches in the vine, of his holy nature. They are one with him in righteousness and true holiness. He is the divine root, from which all the branches, by the influence of the holy Spirit, derive their nourishment and growth. From him is their fruit found. And the heavenly husbandman, purposing to make the branches very fruitful, has provided effectual means: among which the chief is, his fatherly correction. This he sends to all his children, and in the tenderest love. He would have them to bring forth much fruit, that herein he may be glorified—holy fruit, produced by his care and culture, and ripened by daily communications of his grace. Therefore he appoints many heavy trials and crosses, by which he designs to bring them not only to believe in his love, but also to a growing enjoyment of it. He would communicate to them an increase of its blessings. He would have them nearer to himself and more like to himself—holy *as* he is holy—not in degree, but in likeness. He would teach them more submission to his will, for which he wisely and mercifully suits the cross. He would improve their love to him, which he does by manifesting his to them: therefore he sends his cross to deaden their hearts to other love, that he may give them a happier sense of his. And his children have found suffering times blessed times. They never had such nearness to their Father, such holy freedom with him, and such heavenly refreshments from him, as under the cross. It only took away what stopped the increase of this happiness, which thereby was made more spiritual and exalted. The cross, thus sanctified, is the greatest blessing on this side of heaven: because by it the Father keeps his children in the closest communion, that they have with him upon earth; by it he purges them, makes them fruitful, and partakers of his holiness; by it he crucifies the life of sense, deadens them to the world, mortifies their lusts and passions; and by it, as the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day. Most blessed renewal! Daily the Father communicates, and by means of the cross, new life, new strength, and new comfort to the inward man. By the right spirit renewed within him he learns the necessity of the daily cross—he sees the merciful appointment of it to teach resignation to the Father's holy will, to work a conformity to the first-born among many brethren, both in suffering and by suffering, to bring in sensible experience of the Father's support and comfort. What blessings are these! how great! how precious! to be branches in the vine, and to have the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the husbandman, who grafts them into him—Oh what an infinite mercy is this! and to be under his special care, faithfully watched over, in order to remove every thing hurtful, and to bestow every thing useful, this love passeth understanding: and to have this love to feast upon in the absence of other comforts, to have them taken away only to make room for this, to enjoy this most plentifully, even under troubles and afflictions, and to be only purged by them in order to bring forth much fruit; these are triumphs of divine love. O my God and Father! I confess and deplore my frequent mistaking thy dealings with me. I did not see they were all in love. Through mine ignorance and self-will I thought thy cross was a punishment, and I used wickedly to despise the chastening of the Lord. Pardon thy servant concerning this thing. Forgive mine opposition to thy cross, and subdue mine impatient desire to shake it off. Holy Father, mortify my will, and make it bow to thine. Thy will be done in me, and by me.

Purge me, and make me fruitful under the cross. Chasten me, that I may be a partaker of thy holiness. I bless thee, O my God, for the desire which I have to keep up communion with thee in my sufferings: I believe thou art my perfectly reconciled Father in Jesus, and therefore, trusting to thy love in him, I would take up thy cross and expect under it thy covenant blessings. Yes, Lord. This is of grace. Thine be the praise for showing me the need of suffering, and of renewing me by it in the inward man to a conformity to thy holy will. I now see thy love herein. It is as much love to crucify the outward man as to renew the inward man. I believe it in my judgment: O blessed God, let me experience it in my heart and walk. Order all my crosses, that they may work together under thee for thy glory and for my good: and if afflictions abound, let consolations abound also. I have thy promise, and I rely upon it. Let it be fulfilled unto thy servant for thy dear Son's sake. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

This blessed communion with the Father and the Son, which the sanctified use of the cross is made the means of promoting, is maintained by the Holy Spirit. He is a person in the Godhead coequal and coeternal with the Father and with the Son. It is his office to apply and to make effectual all covenant blessings. Faith in the Son; and through him love to the Father, are from his influence. He is the Lord and giver of all spiritual life, and of every spiritual enjoyment: for so the apostle teaches in his prayer for the Corinthians—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. This communion of the Holy Ghost consisted in partaking by his means with the Lord Jesus Christ in his grace, and with the Father in his love. The Holy Ghost made the application: he quickened the soul, and inspired the breath of life into it, and on him it depends for every spiritual act, as much as the life of the body does on its breathing. Whoever steadfastly believes in Jesus under the cross, and experiences under it the Father's love has this fellowship with the Father and the Son by the operation of the Holy Spirit: therefore that sweet grace, which bears up with faith in Jesus, and with patience under the Father's rod, is said to be from him—"The fruit of the Spirit is *long-suffering*"—He enables the soul to wait quietly. And if the time be long, and the suffering hard, he gives long patience. He does not take away the sense of pain, but he bestows strength to bear it; and by it he produces a plentiful harvest of graces and blessings. Thus he teaches us himself—"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby." These are the fruits of the Spirit: they are all of his producing. And they are fruits of righteousness, which none can produce but those who are one with Christ; and in him righteous before God. Although sense cannot perceive how they should grow or ripen upon the cross of Christ, yet faith can. The promise is sure. And waiting faith, exercised with suffering, finds many promised fruits. O my soul, consider this precious scripture, and with close attention. Study it. Treasure it up in thy heart. It contains a rich cordial for the afflicted. Observe, there is love in sending the cross; love to be manifested by it, and heavenly fruits of love to grow upon it. Why, then, is suffering so hard? Why art thou so little profited by it. Is it not generally barren, because thou art not looking to the word of promise, and depending upon the Holy Spirit to give thee the promised fruit? Ask thyself therefore, especially in the hour of suffering, Am I now expecting the communion of the Holy Ghost, that by his grace I may partake with the Son in his salvation, and with the Father in his love? Is this my present experience? There is no bearing the cross without it. Art thou then, O my soul, trusting to him for this happy fellowship, and hoping, that, as thou art a branch in the vine, and the husbandman is now purging thee, thou mayest bring forth much fruit? And observe, what kind of fruit it is. All the effects of being in union with Christ, and of having communion with him, are called *fruits of righteousness*. Christ is the vine. The branch must be one with him before it can live and grow—one with him in his life and death—a partaker of his divine righteousness—and then the branch abiding in him by the influence of the Holy Spirit will be made fruitful in love, joy, peace, long-

suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. He brings forth all the fruit that is to the glory of God—and it is all *peaceable* fruit; for it is produced by him in consequence of covenant-love, by which the Father is revealed as the God of peace, and the Son as the great peace-maker; and when the Holy Spirit enables the poor sinner to believe this, then he gives him joy and peace in believing: being justified by faith, he has peace with God through Jesus Christ. The cross soon comes after this—not to destroy, but to try this faith—not to take away, but to confirm this peace: it is sent to give proof of the soundness of faith, and to manifest the sweetness of divine love; for it comes from the God of peace, and all the fruits which he intends to produce by it are *peaceable*, such as should increase the happy sense of peace in the minds of his children. And for this purpose the Holy Spirit abides with them. He has revealed the Father's love in scripture, and he is a faithful witness of it to their hearts. He sheds it abroad, and satisfies them of it: yea, he gives them sensible experience and enjoyment of it under the cross. This produces a quiet submission to his will, and an humble dependence upon his power: which are manifested by waiting upon God in all ways and means for the grace promised to his afflicted children. The cross requires great grace, and therefore calls forth much prayer. Suffering times are praying times. The cross brings sinners upon their knees: Manasseh in affliction entreated the Lord: so did Paul—"Behold, he prayeth." keeps believers upon their knees, as the prophet witnesses—"Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them." The Lord himself declares the same—"I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." Accordingly they did seek him—"Come," say they, "and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." Oh blessed fruit of affliction! when sanctified by the Spirit it teaches the children of God to pray fervently, and to continue instant in prayer: it discovers the weakness of the flesh, and the rebellion of the will, and shows the necessity of drawing near to God for strength and patience. It keeps the mind in a praying frame, expecting by the grace of the Spirit communion with the Father and the Son. The cross makes this communion necessary. It cannot be endured without a belief of the Father's love in Jesus, and therefore the Spirit of prayer keeps this belief in exercise, and enables the soul to plead the promise of strength to endure patiently, and to bring forth much fruit. The promise cannot fail. They who trust in it cannot be disappointed, but shall find grace to help in time of need. As prayer is thus necessary, so the Holy Spirit generally makes it sweet under the cross. Is any afflicted among you? Let him pray. Prayer is the appointed means of his comfort. If affliction send him to God, God will meet him and make him joyful in his house of prayer. How encouraging are these words!—"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." In every case of distress, draw nigh in faith to God: he is a very present help. Seek his face, and you will find him near unto you: for the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, nigh to hear, to answer, and to comfort. Thus his promise runs—"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer: thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am."—What is your burden? I am present to give strength to bear it. What is your grief? Here are my comforts—Do your tribulations abound? Here are my consolations abounding also. Here I am—Ask what you will believing, and it shall be done unto you. Oh what times of refreshing are these? The Holy Ghost sensibly comforts the afflicted. When they draw nigh to God, he is present to make their hearts joyful. He dispels their darkness with the light of his countenance, and turns their mourning into joy. And thus they have not only communion with God in prayer, but also such communications of his heavenly love, that they can often say, It is good for us that we have been in trouble.

In times of trouble the WORD also is generally sweet. All people in distress look out for some comfort: and the Holy Spirit directs believers to the Scriptures. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

The afflicted feel their want of patience and comfort, which puts them upon careful hearing and reading of the good word of God. They want to know what it says of their case; and when they meet a suitable promise, then they have a ground of hope. Their present trials require them to seek for something more than the truth of the promise. This being credited, they therefore expect the promised blessing. When the famine was in Canaan, Jacob and his family could not have been kept alive by believing there was corn in Egypt: they must either fetch it or die. Trouble calls for the experience of the promised blessings, and when they are received at such a time, they are sweet indeed. They feel as ease doth after pain. When the Holy Spirit applies the comfort, the promise by which he applies it is precious. It is like a reviving cordial to a fainting heart. Oh how sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth. Honey is sweet; but the word is sweeter. When through patience and comfort of the scriptures the afflicted believer enjoys the good of the promise, then he can say—Now I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me; let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort according to thy word unto thy servant.

Sweet is the comfort which the afflicted receive from God the Comforter under the cross; not only *in* suffering but also *after* it. AFTERWARD also "it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness." He who carries the cross of Christ does not labour in vain and spend his strength for nought; but he is bearing forth good seed. If he sow it in tears, yet he shall reap in joy. The Lord looks at the fruit, and intends to bring forth much of it by the cross. We are apt to look at the suffering, and forget the fruit. He has the end in view in the use of all means; and the Holy Spirit has revealed this clearly, that we might depend upon him for receiving the proper fruit of affliction. The Lord says, he led his people through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were flying fiery serpents and scorpions, and drought, that he might humble them, and that he might prove them, to do them good AT THE LATTER END. He intended to do them good. This was first in his heart. Then the way in which he would do it: he would lead them through many afflictions; by which they should find *at the latter end* how good God was to them. The promise of this was their encouragement to bear the cross till they reaped the fruit. In like manner the Lord says to the afflicted Jews—"I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you AN EXPECTED END"—such an end as you would wish, and having my promise, such as you may safely hope for—my thoughts indeed are not as your thoughts—you think I have cast you off, and that your present cross is to crush you: now I mean to do you good by it; and so the end will prove. Wait a little in faith, and all will come to a happy issue.

Are these scriptures the truth of God? Has the eternal Spirit promised in them that, although the bearing of the cross be very painful, yet it is very profitable? Will he afterwards cause them to bring forth much fruit who have been exercised with it? Art thou then waiting, O my soul, under all thy troubles for the promised end? Dost thou expect it, and in patience tarry the Lord's leisure? Canst thou look back, and see how merciful the dealings of thy God have been—how gracious his rod—how loving his correction? Canst thou look forward under every cross, persuaded that God will do thee good at the latter end? that he will cause many peaceable fruits to grow upon this seemingly barren tree? yea, that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for thee an eternal weight of glory, far more excellent than can be conceived? O God the Holy Ghost! I do believe it: I would not doubt of the truth of the promise in thy word, nor of the truth of thy grace in my heart. I therefore beseech thee, O thou Spirit Jehovah, to enable me to keep up communion with thee in all my trials, that I may bring forth those peaceable fruits of righteousness. Thou art the giver of every grace. I acknowledge thee to be the author of my spiritual life: I was dead in trespasses and sins, and thou hast quickened me. It is of thy mere gift that I have any faith, and that upon the trial it was found to be true faith. I bless thee for this grace, and humbly pray for the continuance and for the increase of it. Meet me in the use of all means, and enable me to grow in

faith, rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, that I may also grow in love to his Father and to my Father. O thou divine revealer of his heavenly love! shed it abroad more abundantly in my heart, that I may learn more resignation to his will, more subjection to his authority, and more submission to his rod. I acknowledge thee, O holy-making Spirit, to be the teacher of patience; and what I have learned was thy revelation. It was in thy strength that I was enabled to go on with any quietness bearing my cross. Thy grace made me willing, and nothing else can keep me willing, to have the flesh crucified with its affections and lusts. O God, put forth thine almighty power, and enable me to part with every thing which would hinder my fellowship with the Father and the Son. I desire so to walk this day as to have growing fellowship with the eternal Three; and I desire it through thine influence. O God the Holy Ghost, carry on thy work. Exalt and purify my faith and patience, and every grace: if it be thy will to do this under the cross, oh make me willing and able to bear it. Let every cross bring forth richer and riper fruit, until thou give me an exceeding great and eternal harvest of glory. I ask this in the name of Jesus, and I expect an answer of grace through the Father's love in him, to whom with thee, O blessed Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, be equal glory, worship, and praise, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Meditate, O my soul, with seriousness upon this great subject. Study the scripture account of the cross. The knowledge of it enters into the very essence of the peace and comfort of thy walk. Thou canst not run away from the cross; thou canst not cast it off: remember, if thou wilt be Christ's disciple, thou must take it up daily and follow him. If it be very heavy and very grievous, yet it will not hinder thee from following him. He carried the heaviest part for thee—he endured the curse and punishment due to thy sins—he left no wrath for thee to suffer. Blessed be his love, the cross has no curse in it now—thy sufferings are all sent from love—and his love will help thee to bear them and to profit by them; for he has promised to bless and sanctify them to his people. And he makes them a blessing indeed. Never on this side of heaven does he give them such near and happy communion with himself as under the cross. Oh read then, and study what is revealed in scripture concerning it. Go over it again and again. Learn well, and inwardly digest the doctrine of the cross of Christ—the necessity—the benefit—the blessings of it. Meditate and feed upon the sweet promises relating to it: mix faith with them, that they may nourish and strengthen thee in time of need. But never forget that thy cross, be it what it will, is appointed for thee in covenant love. It is the portion allotted thee by thy heavenly Father—decreed in weight and measure to an atom. Thou shalt not bear it one moment longer than he has determined; and many precious fruits it shall produce. Thou wilt find suffering times growing times—growth in faith and patience, in mortification to sin, and in fellowship with the ever-blessed Trinity. The author of thy faith puts it to the trial: it comes out of the lion's den unhurt: it comes out of the fiery furnace refined. God is glorified hereby, and thou art strengthened. He sends the cross to teach thee patience, and he continues it for the exercise and for the improvement of the same grace. He intends by his chastening to crucify the flesh, and to mortify thy members which are upon the earth. In love he takes away sensual, that he may give thee spiritual joys. He does not hate thee; but love guides every stroke of his chastening. He is only weakening thine attachment to earthly things, that he may increase thy communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. Oh what blessings are these! Meditate, O my soul, much and often upon them. Pray for the experience of them in time of need; and be assured with all these helps, the cross will be exercise hard enough for thy patience. Thou canst carry it only in the strength of almighty grace. May the Lord strengthen thee from day to day to run the race set before thee, till thou win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER X.

The believer exercised with the inward cross, learns to walk more humbly with his God.

THE outward cross is not always a burden alike heavy. God gives his children a little respite. After they have been long tried, he sometimes removes their trouble, and gives them ease and outward prosperity. Their sun arises as it doth in nature. After many cold and dark days, a fine season comes—finer for coming after them. The sky grows clear and serene; the air is soft and refreshing; the sun shines with warm and enlivening rays; every thing looks pleasant, and smiles around you. So it is in the kingdom of grace. The believer may not be always in heaviness through manifold afflictions. He has his times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. He prospers and is in health. The blessing of God is upon his substance. Every thing that he takes in hand succeeds. He is happy in his circumstances, and happy in his family. He sees the goodness of God in these mercies, and he is thankful. But if the heavenly Father sometimes indulge his children with the removal of the outward cross, yet he never does with the inward. They carry it all their days; and a heavy burden it is. So long as they are in the body, while they are in this tabernacle, they do groan, being burdened: for

THE INWARD CROSS is the fault and corruption of sinful nature, which doth remain in the regenerate, and is their continual grief and plague; because it is always opposing their holy and happy walk with God. It is called in scripture

THE FLESH; the whole man being carnal, and full of lusting against the Spirit;

THE OLD MAN; being the first in us, before the new man is created by the Spirit of regeneration;

A BODY OF SIN; made up completely of members and appetites, in which there is not only an absence of all good, but also a propensity to all evil, insomuch that nothing can move or stir in this body, but what is sinful;

THE LAW OF SIN; because sin rules and governs the natural man;

INDWELLING SIN; because it dwells in the whole man, both in soul and body;

CONCUPISCENCE, or LUST; which the apostle says, he should not have known to be sin unless the law had said—Thou shalt not covet or lust.

This fallen nature is also said to be corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, to be contrary to the Spirit, to rebel against the law of God and not to be subject to it, neither indeed can be. "This corruption of nature doth remain, according to our reformers," Art. 9—"Yea in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh," called in Greek, *froneema sarkos*, which some do expound, "the wisdom," some "sensuality," some "the affection," some "the desire of the flesh," is not subject to the law of God: and although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that "concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." And in the 15th Art. *of Christ alone without sin*, they say, "that all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things: and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

The compilers of our articles were holy men, and taught of God. They spake his mind and will according to the oracles of truth. And it will be a great comfort to a poor soldier, wearied with fighting against those lusts, which war against the soul, to find that the best Christians in every age have been engaged in the same holy war. This will mightily encourage him to take to him the whole armour of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Attend then, O my soul, to the law and to the testimony. Pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Desire grace to submit to the truth of God, that, whatever he teaches plainly and expressly in his word, thou mayst believe it, and abide by it. Read and pray, till thou art satisfied, and the conviction of

mind influence thy heart and walk. Art thou to carry the inward cross all the way to heaven? Is there no discharge in this war? no truce to be made? not even a cessation of arms? But art thou to be fighting on the good fight of faith till the captain of thy salvation take thee out of the field of battle? Oh hard service! to be night and day—at home and abroad—in the closet and in the church—at hearing the word and meditating upon it—fasting and praying—at the shop and at the exchange—every where and at all times—forced to be in arms against the assaults of indwelling sin! This is a warfare terrible indeed to flesh and blood. The length of it—never ended so long as breath is in the body; the painfulness of it—consisting in being at war with a man's self, and in resisting his bosom sins and strongest appetites—What discouragements are these from entering into, and from continuing in this battle! Why should it be wondered, then, that some persons, who only follow the camp, and are not of it, should repent when they see this war, and return to Egypt? or that others, pretending to be on Christ's side, but never one with him, should dream of shaking off this cross, and of sitting down here in a land of perfect peace? This is the coward's paradise. They want to rest quiet on this side of Jordan, and would not go over with Jesus to fight for the promised land. O dear Saviour, keep thy noble army from this delusion of Satan! So long as they are in the body of sin and death, make them good soldiers of Christ Jesus, resisting unto blood, striving against sin; for so long must we be in this hot battle. It is decreed by the sovereign will of God—and he is always of one mind. He has revealed it in his word of truth, that the corruption of nature doth remain in his regenerate children; they have an old man and a new; they have flesh and spirit; they have nature and grace; and he has described the combat which is to last through life between these two. The beloved apostle bears a clear testimony. He is speaking of those whom the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and who had fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and who proved the truth of this by their walking in the light. He puts himself among them, and declares—"If we say, that we have no sin *now*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"—If we say—he saith not, If *thou* say, as if he spake of some particular person; nor if *ye* say, as if he intended ordinary Christians alone—but if we apostles, or whatever we be, say so; if any of us, if I, for instance, should think I had no sin now, who am a saint of a hundred years old, because I was a great favourite of the Lord Christ, and have been a great sufferer for him, or because I have lived blameless before men, and have been a witness for the truth in my writings, and am ready to seal it with my blood; if, upon account of any thing done by me, or in me, of any real excellency or attainment, I should fancy myself in a state of sinless perfection; the Holy Ghost charges me with self-deceit. A dreadful delusion! arising from the pride of my heart and its rebellion against God, and discovering the most gross ignorance of God's righteousness in the holy law, and of Christ's righteousness in the glorious gospel: but if I was to say, as well as to think it; if I should tell any body, Now I have no sin; I am perfect; now, at this time, I have received perfect purity of heart; for ever since I have received it, I have had nothing stirring in me for one year, for two, twenty, forty years, but love, pure love to God; God is in all my thoughts, and nothing but God; I do his will on earth, as it is done in heaven; if I should say so, I should tell a great lie;—for I should deceive myself, and the truth would not be in me.

Are these indeed the very words of the apostle? "If we say that we have no sin now, we deccive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Can no other sense be fairly put upon them, but that the holy John had sin in him at every given moment of his life? Is this the plain literal meaning of the passage? As it certainly is, observe then, O my soul, the decisive evidence given here by the Holy Ghost concerning the inward cross. Pray for his teaching that thou mayst understand, and pray for his grace, that thou mayst profit from, this scripture. Here is his infallible record concerning St. John and all highly favoured believers—He asserts, that there was no time of their lives in which they were free from indwelling sin: God forbid, then, that I should think I have no sin! He avers that if they should say they had none, they were deceived

and that if they should stand to it, as popish mystics, and protestant perfectionists do, the searcher of hearts declares that they lie, and do not tell the truth—the truth is not in them: for the father of lies has flattered them and drawn them into self-idolatry, with a wicked design to corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. Beware, O my soul, of this deceit! The Holy Ghost has warned thee of it. He foresaw how the first sin would break out in after times, and pride would persuade men that they were perfect in the flesh; he therefore so guarded this scripture, that none can mistake it but such as turn away their ears from the truth. He put all the words in the present tense, lest any should think he was speaking of time past, or of what men were before the blood of Christ had cleansed them. If WE NOW SAY—We, who now have fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and are walking in the light of their countenance—say that WE HAVE NO SIN, nor had any formerly, he is not speaking of that: If he were, the Holy Ghost understands grammar, and can make no mistake in expressing himself; he would certainly have used the past tense, but he uses the present, NOW HAVE NO SIN, so as not to want the cleansing blood of Jesus this moment as much as ever—If we have any such thoughts, WE NOW DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT NOW IN US. How forcible and strong is this testimony from the mouth of John! And the sense as well as the grammar shows that he is speaking of believers, and that there is sin in them; for throughout the chapter he treats of the very same persons, and describes not what they were before, but what they are since they received the grace of God. They were cleansed from all sin by the blood of the Lamb, were admitted into communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit, and they enjoyed this communion, walking in the light, as God is in the light. These are the persons here mentioned; of whom God says, they had sin still in them, indwelling sin; the fault and corruption of nature still remained in them; and if they fancied it did not, they would be sadly deceived; they would entirely mistake the covenant of grace, which was to bring sinners sensible of their wants and miseries to live out of themselves upon the fulness of the God-man; they would forget their own character, under which alone they can be saved, salvation being only for sinners; they would fall into the crime of the devil, by pride exalting themselves against the person and work of the incarnate God; and they would quite pervert the law and the gospel; for, in order to maintain their inherent perfection, they are forced to legalize the gospel, and to make it consist of certain terms and conditions, upon the performance of which sinners shall be saved; and then, in order to comfort themselves with their having performed these terms and conditions, they are forced to turn rank Antinomians: they lessen the evil of sin, they excuse it in themselves, and make just nothing of it: they call it by several pretty soft names, such as infirmity, frailty, excrescence, and at last they get quite rid of it by laying it upon the devil, and by terming it an injection of old Satan. And thus they deceive themselves into perfection, and insist upon it that they have no sin, although they have enough in them to damn the whole world. O God! open the eyes of these self-deceivers! and bring them into the way of truth.

Such is the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit. He asserts that the greatest believers, while in the body, have sin in them. Dost thou yield, O my soul, to his testimony? Art thou fully convinced of it from the work of his grace, as well as from the word of his truth? Dost thou feel indwelling sin? Is it the plague of thy heart, and the burden of thy life? When thou art willing to walk humbly with thy God, is it continually in thy way, raising objections, putting difficulties, and suggesting hindrances? Is it like a heavy weight pressing thee down in thy race, that thou canst not run so long, or so fast, as thou couldst wish? Since this is indeed thy daily cross, and the bearing of it the hardest part of thy warfare, oh read with diligence the scripture account of it. Take notice of the Lord's champions, how they felt under this burden, from whence they derived strength to bear it, and had comfort under it. Hear the man after God's own heart crying out—"Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden; they are too heavy for me." David had a heavy load: he was ready to sink, and he could not cast it off: he could not go into his closet or to the house

of God: he could not sit upon his throne, or go in and out before his family: but this grievous cross so bowed him down greatly, that he went mourning all the day long. The burden of it was intolerable, and would have crushed him under it, if he had not learned how to cast it on the Lord—"Make haste," says he, "to help me, O Lord God of my salvation!" Here he found relief: the prayer of faith was heard, and God was the strength of his salvation.

Under the same burden a New Testament saint went groaning all his days. He had a hard conflict between the flesh and the spirit, and he has left the account of it upon record. Blessed be God for the seventh chapter of the Romans! We there read of the inward cross, with which all the children of God are exercised. In the very same Paul there was delight in the law of God after the inward man; but he found another law in his members, rebelling against the law of God: the flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing, never ceased to assault the spirit with its vile thoughts, legal workings, and rebellious inclinations: when he had a will to do good, he could not do it so perfectly, as he desired: his best moments were never free from the inroads of indwelling sin: therefore, in the bitterness of his soul he cried out,—"Oh! wretched man that I am!"—Oh! that sigh came from the bottom of his heart—I know what he felt—he groaned, being burdened—weary and tired with this continual conflict, he looked out for deliverance—"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He saw by faith his almighty Saviour, and in him expecting everlasting victory—"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He rested upon Christ in the battle, and through him waited for deliverance, knowing that one day he should be made more than conqueror.

Well, then, O my soul, here is comfort. If the corruption of nature be thy cross, so it was to David, and so it was to Paul. Thy case is not singular. It is common to every soldier who is fighting under the banner of Christ. This cross is unavoidable; because it is in thy bosom. It is thine inmost self—thy whole nature—which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. Thou hast not an atom of thy body, nor the least motion or stirring of any faculty in thy soul, but sin is in it; and therefore it is capable of being a plague to the new man. The Holy Ghost speaks thus of the inward warfare—"This I say then: Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh: for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." These words are addressed to the Galatians, who were believers, and called into the liberty of the gospel; but by false teaching they were under a great temptation. They had begun in the spirit, but they thought of being perfected in the flesh. They set out with salvation by faith, but expected salvation at last by works. Among other arguments to convince them of their mistake, here is one unanswerable; namely, No works of ours can save a sinner but such as are perfect; no works of ours are perfect; therefore they cannot save a sinner. And that none of them are perfect, is certain, because in every one of them there is something of the flesh of corrupt nature, as well as something of the spirit and of spiritual nature. These two are contrary as life and death, and they are always in action, every moment the one lusting against the other; so that no believer can do the things which he would, so perfectly as the holy law requires.

How grievous must this inward cross be to a real believer! For it consists in the opposition which he finds within him to God and to the things of God. The flesh ever lusteth against the spirit—the old man against the new. There is a continual war between these contrary powers. The flesh is a complete body of sin, armed with every member and instrument of rebellion that can resist the motions and actions of the new man. There is darkness in the understanding, always clouding the light of the glorious gospel; and therefore we know but in part. The will of the flesh always opposes the holy will of God. There is enmity in the heart working against the love of God and of his will. There is pride to weaken humility—anger to oppose meekness—the carnal mind to fight against spiritual mindedness. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. When you draw near to God in prayer, the imagination will not be confined: it will wander after a thousand vain objects When you are hearing the word, it will disturb

your attention with its unaccountable excursions. It is so sportive and flighty, that you cannot keep it within any bounds. Is it not so, O my soul? Art thou not sensible of this heavy cross? Dost thou not find something in thee always resisting and weakening the exercise of thy graces? and is not this the great plague of thy life? Can there be a greater, than to carry about with thee a sinful nature, daily trying to hinder thee in thy holy walk and happy communion with God? Oh how much does it concern thee, then, to be well skilled in bearing this cross, and behaving under it as a good soldier of Christ Jesus! And to this end the principles before laid down are absolutely necessary. Without them thou canst not rightly understand the nature of indwelling sin, and canst not possibly gain victory over it. Only the doctrines of grace received into thy heart can enable thee to walk with God under this cross. Call to mind, then, what was agreed on in the covenant of the Trinity, and was fulfilled in the person and work of Immanuel for thy peace with the Father, and for thy returning to him in love, and has been applied to thee by the Holy Spirit, who has given thee faith in Jesus, and has manifested the love of the Father in him: thou art therefore now one with thy covenant-head; in him complete and perfect, although thou art in thyself still a sinner. Thou hast a body of sin, through the lusting of which thou art not able to keep the holy law according to its full demand in any one instance. But thou art, before thy Father, what thy surety is. He sees thee in him, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing—accepted as he is—beloved with the same love—looked upon with the same joy—and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him. Thy surety lived for thee: thou hast the righteousness of God for thy justification. Thy surety died for thee: in him thou art as truly dead unto sin as Christ himself is. Thy surety rose again, and took possession of spiritual and eternal life for thee. He was delivered for thine offences, and raised again for thy justification. Thou shalt reign with him, as certainly as he has now the crown upon his own head. Such is the perfect salvation which is for thee; although thou art still the subject of sin: for thy pardon is without exception or reverse—all trespasses are freely forgiven. Thy justification to life is absolute; for it is God himself that justifieth. He chose thee in Jesus, that thou shouldst be holy and without blame before him—and so thou art. As a member in his body, thou art without blemish. Here is thy relief, under the inward cross. The Father chose thee in his Son, looks upon thee in him, and deals with thee according to covenant love; there is therefore now no condemnation to thee, who art in Christ Jesus. With the sweet sense of this upon thy conscience, persuaded that God is at peace with thee, take up the inward cross. In this delightful view see the curse removed. Thou hast no reason to fear wrath, or death, or hell. Victory over all sins and enemies is certain. Daily, eternal victory is promised. In this faith follow the noble army, who carried this cross to their graves. Fight as they did, looking unto Jesus. Sin is in thee: it was in them; but they looked upon it as a vanquished foe, slain, and put to death when Jesus died for sin once. Likewise reckon thou also thyself to be in him dead unto sin—freed from the dreadful stroke of justice by his death—freed as truly as he is—and therefore thou art no more liable than he is to be condemned and punished. And for the strengthening of this faith, seek for fellowship with him in his death. It is thy privilege, as thou art planted in the likeness of his death to derive power and efficacy from it daily to put sin to death. The more steadfastly thou believest that thou art one with him in his death, the more wilt thou find thy sinful nature crucified with him. Communion is always according to the faith of union with Christ. The strongest faith must have the strongest hold of him, and thereby draw the most virtue from him. It is true, as our faith increases we become more spiritual; and we see corruption more as we see motes in the sun beams. The senses of the new man by exercise gain a quicker perception of sin—we become all over tender as the eye—jealous of the motions, yea, of the appearance of evil. This is real growth. Sin is more felt, in order that the power of Jesus may be put forth to make us hate it, resist it, and overcome it more. As believers are more sensible of their sinfulness in the first Adam, so they grow up into the second Adam, the Lord from heaven: they bear the cross of the corruption of the first, which leads them to constant fellowship with the second—in his death,

for the pardon of their corruption—in the power of his death to mortify sin, that it may not have dominion over them.

Corruption is in thee, and it will strive for dominion. Thy sins will sometimes fiercely assault. Their allies, the world and the devil, will join them with stratagems and force: when the battle is hot, and thou art weak, then it behoves thee to live by faith upon Jesus as thy surety, now acting for thee in heaven, as he acted for thee upon earth. He is gone up, as thy high priest, to carry thy name within the veil. He bears it upon the ephod on his shoulders, and upon the breast-plate on his heart: his power and his love are engaged for thee, now he is in glory. He stands in the presence of God, as thy representative. The Father sees thee in him: and thou art in his sight what thy forerunner is. As he stands there, so dost thou stand—righteous as he is righteous—holy as he is holy—beloved as he is beloved—and shalt be blessed as he is blessed. View by faith thy nature in him, exalted and glorified, and for the joy set before thee in him take up thy cross. It is a heavy burden—it is a hard warfare. True. But consider, who shall lay any thing to thy charge for indwelling sin? It is God that justifieth thee from it, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for thee. He appears in the presence of God for thee, as thine intercessor. He is always in court to represent thy person, and to carry thy cause, especially as to what concerns sin. "If any of us sin," says the beloved disciple, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins;" in this office he is skilful, and faithful, and compassionate. He has thine interest at heart—thy safety, thy comfort, under this cross, and thy victory over it. His very glory is so interwoven with thine, that they are one; yea, the advocate and his clients form but one spiritual body, of which every member is what the head is. O my God and Saviour! I bless thee and worship thee for acting for me as mine advocate and intercessor in heaven. Increase, I beseech thee, my faith, that I may see more of the glory of thine office, and may make more use of it, in the bearing of mine inward cross. Oh let thy faithful witness abide with me to enable me, without doubt or wavering, to trust in what thou hast done for me upon earth, and to draw comfort from what thou art now doing for me in heaven. Into thy hands I desire to commit my cause. Lord, undertake for me. Be surety for thy servant for good, and guide me with thy counsel, till thou bring me to thy glory. I ask this for thy mercies' sake. *Amen.* Is this the true state of the case? Is it certain from the word of God? Is it confirmed from matter of fact? Did the highest believer upon earth experience this inward cross? When his conscience summoned him to the bar of God, and put him upon inquiring what he would plead there for his justification, had he any thing to urge but the sacrifice and righteousness of the ever-blessed Immanuel? And is not this thy plea, O my soul? Dost not thou find so much weakness and infirmity in thy holy things, that thou wouldst seek atonement for the iniquity of them through the intercession of the great high priest? And thou wouldst not think of standing before the throne to claim eternal life as the reward due to thine own holiness. Is not this thine experience? If it be, then take up thy cross in this FAITH. It is thy grief that sin is in thee. The motions and lustings of it are thy burden. The resisting and opposing them is thy continual warfare. And thou hast no prospect before thee of enjoying perfect deliverance from this heavy cross, until death release thee. Blessed be God for the salvation that is in Christ Jesus! There is a provision made in the covenant of grace for the pardon of indwelling sin, for victory over it daily, and for the eternal destruction of the whole body of sin: it shall have no existence in the members, any more than it has in their glorified head. Here is a comfort for thee, O my soul! of God's own providing and of God's own applying. When it is applied to the heart, the cross will be easy. Observe carefully what is revealed concerning the being of sin in the best Christians, and concerning the pardon of it. The Holy Ghost declares it dwells in them, but they are forgiven all trespasses—they are in Christ without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—in the first Adam they are heirs of sin, death, and hell—in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, they are heirs of righteousness, life, and glory. He is their

covenant head: and they are before God, what he is. This is the record of truth —YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM. Abide by it, O my soul. Give it full credit, and boldly plead it against all the charges of guilt, and fears of wrath.—

"It is true, I have sin in me, but it is pardoned. God has forgiven me ALL trespasses. I stand before him in my surety, who undertook for me, and I am perfect in him. The Father chose me in his Son: he looks upon the face of his beloved, and sees me in him. In him he is well pleased; so he is with me. As he loves him, so he loves me. This is the glorious privilege, which by faith I now enjoy. I deny sight and sense; and I stick to the word of God. I adhere strictly to its testimony concerning me, believing myself to be dead indeed unto sin in Christ, and in him absolutely freed from guilt and condemnation. The Father is at peace with me, and he loves me in his Son, and with the same love with which he loves him—His Father and my Father. With this persuasion I go to war with my corruptions. I see their traitorous designs. They are fighting against every thing that is dear and precious to my soul. But having the promised grace of the almighty Saviour for my help, I desire to set upon them in his name. I know he has them among mine other enemies under his feet, and I have his word for it that he will put them under mine. Yea, Lord, I believe, and on thy faithful promise I trust, this day. Although I must carry my cross, yet I bless thee and worship thee for removing curse and wrath from it: I can now take it up as thy soldier, and fight against it in thy strength, expecting victory from thee, and to thy glory. O my God, save me from indwelling sin. Let me feel it my burden. Glorify thy grace in me, and by me, that, being endued with power from on high, I may hold out resisting and conquering it till thou give me everlasting victory."

If this, O my soul, be thy constant dependence, then the cross will become light. Guilt makes it heavy. The curse in it makes it intolerable; but by faith thou canst see guilt and curse removed: then it will be no hindrance to thee in thy heavenly walk, but will daily call forth into use and exercise those graces which will help thee forward, and especially

PATIENCE. Here is great need of patience—a continual war—and within thee—thine own bosom the seat of it—and thine own lusts carrying it on and maintaining it. The more spiritual thou art, the more wilt thou feel this inward conflict. The more thou growest into Christ, the more will thy corruptions stir and move: they will be thy continual plague; so that thou wilt not be able to draw any comfort from what thou art in thyself. Here is exercise for patience. Every where indwelling sin is present with thee: upon every temptation ready with its flatteries to entice, and with its power to break out into act and deed. The opposing it is like cutting off a right hand and plucking out a right eye—as contrary to nature, as painful. The hand and the eye cannot be destroyed twice; but inbred lusts, overcome a thousand times, are not in the least discouraged from warring against the soul. Like the troubled sea, never at rest, they are always casting up some sinful mire and dirt. What canst thou do without faith in the Redeemer's blood, without patience to wait for the Redeemer's strength. Every moment there is need of faith and patience, and every moment, if these graces be exercised, they will be improved. The bearing of the cross continually, and the fighting under it on the side of God, will also be the means of teaching thee

THE TRUE SPIRITUAL MORTIFICATION, which does not consist in sin not being in thee, nor in its being put upon the cross daily, nor yet in its being kept upon it. There must be something more to establish perfect peace in thy conscience; and that is the testimony of God concerning the body of sin. He has provided for thy perfect deliverance from it in Christ. Every thing needful for this purpose was finished by him upon the cross. He was thy surety. He suffered for thee. Thy sins were crucified with him, and nailed to his cross. They were put to death when he died: for he was thy covenant head, and thou, as a member of his body, wast legally represented by him, and art indeed dead to sin by his dying to sin once. The law has now no more right to condemn thee, a believer, than it has to condemn him. Justice is bound to deal with thee as it has with thy risen and ascended Saviour. If thou dost not thus see

thy complete mortification in him, sin will reign in thee. No sin can be crucified, either in heart or life, unless it be first pardoned in conscience; because there will be want of faith to receive the strength of Jesus, by whom alone it can be crucified. If it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power. If the believer does not see his perfect deadness to sin in Jesus, he will open a wide door to unbelief; and if he be not persuaded of his completeness in Christ, he gives room for the attacks of self-righteous and legal tempers. If Christ be not all in all, self must still be looked upon as something great, and there will be food left for the pride of self-importance and self-sufficiency; so that he cannot grow unto the death of Christ in sensible experience, farther than he believes himself to be dead to sin in Christ. The more clearly and steadfastly he believes this, as the apostle did—

I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST—in proportion will he cleave to Christ, and receive from him greater power to crucify sin. This believing view of his absolute mortification in Christ is the true gospel method of mortifying sin in our persons.

Examine then, O my soul, the mistakes which thou hast made, and the temptations which thou art under, concerning this leading truth in thy walk. Pray to thy God for his wisdom to guide thee. Without it thou wilt be afraid, where no fear is. Thou wilt be inclined to think this doctrine rather encouraging to sin, because it seems to carnal reason to take off thy mind from watchfulness against it, and from praying for victory over it. But be assured this is a great error. If thou art not complete in Christ, thou never canst be complete. Seek for the death of sin where thou wilt, it is not to be found but in his death. Try to conquer it upon any other principle than faith in his death, the very attempt is sinful, and proves thee to be under the law. Unless thou art one with him in his death, there can be no pardon of sin, and consequently no victory over it. Oh, fear not then to lay the whole weight of thy salvation upon Jesus! Depend on him, as dying to sin for thee, and look at thyself dead to sin in him—as completely dead to it as he is. Read the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Study the infinite, the everlasting sufficiency of his death for thine absolute freedom from guilt and condemnation. Trust without wavering: be not afraid to view the everlasting perfection of thy deliverance in Jesus: and this will weaken the tyranny, and crucify the power of sin. This will, and nothing else can. Read the sixth of the Romans, and pray for the Spirit of revelation to open it to thee. There thou wilt discover the true way to mortify sin. It is by believing that thou art planted together with Christ in his death: from thence only thy pardon flows; from thence thy daily victory is received, and from thence thy eternal victory will be perfected. Fight on; soon thou shalt be what Christ now is. The member shall be perfectly like the head. Oh glorious prospect! Thou shalt be with him and like him—spotless and fair, as Jesus, righteous and holy, happy in body and soul. Thou shalt see him as he is, and, awakening after his likeness, thou shalt be satisfied with it. Take up thy cross for the joy here set before thee. Bear it in faith: it will be light and easy to thy pardoned conscience: yea the carrying of it in patience will bring forth many peaceable fruits of righteousness: Among the rest there is one, which in the sight of God is of great price, and which is daily improved by the inward cross; namely,

HUMILITY, which consists in the right knowledge of ourselves, not only of what we have been, but also of what we now are. The best and holiest man upon earth has a corrupt fallen nature: he has flesh still, which is always lusting against the spirit. While he is alive to God, he feels it. He is sensible of the inward conflict. Dead men indeed feel nothing. A dead corpse has no sense of the worms which are eating it up. He that has these lusts in him, and warring against his soul, and yet does not feel them, cannot be spiritually alive. A natural man has no sense of them, because they are in him as worms in a dead body: just so is it with the perfectionist. But so soon, and so long, as he lives to God, he will perceive them. If he be in happy communion with God, indwelling sin is present to interrupt the enjoyment. If he exercise any grace, this besetting sin tries to weaken its actings. If he set about any duty, it will hinder him from doing it so perfectly as God requires, and as he could wish. The abiding sense

of these truths will keep down pride. The believer will see nothing of his own to trust in; no faith, or hope, or love; no faithfulness to grace; no holy obedience; all is stained and polluted. He is forced to cry out, of his best duties: *Unclean, unclean!* In this school the disciple learns to walk humbly with his God. The more he knows of himself, the more humble he becomes. And he grows in this heavenly grace, the more he is acquainted with the mercy of God in Jesus. This, learned by divine teaching, keeps the believer meek and lowly in his own eyes. Nothing softens and melts the soul into holy tenderness like the sense of God's mercy. A man who feels the plague of his own heart, is never truly humbled until he be pardoned. But when he is justified from all things in Christ, in him a partaker of all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven; when he sees all his salvation of grace, of free sovereign grace, flowing from the absolute favour of electing love, and bestowed upon him, as unworthy an object as ever did or can partake of it; then he becomes truly broken-hearted. These truths, taught of God, bring every high thought into subjection to Christ Jesus. The soul bows before him, lies low at his feet, prostrates itself before the throne of his grace, and desires to be kept willing to take all its blessings out of his hands, and to use them to his glory. This is gospel humility, the true abasement of spirit, with which a man, sensible that he is saved by mere mercy, loathes himself. And while the experience of indwelling sin humbles him down to the dust, it produces, through God's grace, the happiest effects; for it keeps him in his strong tower and sanctuary, in which alone he is

Safe. It is ever reminding him of his need of the blood of sprinkling—ever showing him his want of a perfect righteousness—and ever preaching to him the necessity of his being kept by the power of God. And while he hearkens to these lessons, trusting to Jesus, he will stand fast and be established. The arm of the Lord God Almighty will hold him up, and he shall be safe. While he lives thus out of himself, the sense of indwelling sin will lead him to his true

Happiness, which is all in the fulness of the God-man, He will enjoy the more of this, the less he finds in himself. When he cannot draw comfort from any thing of his own, he will seek it more in God. When all the streams are dried up, he will get nearer to the fountain head, and live more upon it. This is the portion of the Lord's people, and the inheritance of all his saints. And in this view indwelling sin is made the means of promoting their

Holiness. They see their continual need of Christ. They can do nothing without him: but, believing their oneness with him, they desire to improve it in experience. Every thing they do keeps them sensible of their sins and wants, and shows them the necessity of living by the faith of the Son of God. This is true humility. The more they are humbled, the more they receive out of the fulness of Jesus: for he giveth more grace—more to produce nearer fellowship with him in his death, whereby sin will be more dead, and in his resurrection, whereby the soul will be more alive to God: so that the humblest believer is the nearest to God, and is the safest, happiest, and holiest of all the men upon earth; because he has most fellowship with God. He dwells in God, and God in him. Meditate, O my soul, upon this use of the cross. Is sin in thee? Dost thou feel it? and art thou fighting against it? And does not this humble thee? Art thou freely forgiven all trespasses, indwelling sin among the rest? Dost thou know that thou art a saved sinner—a brand plucked out of hell? And does not this humble thee? I see reason enough to be humbled: but I feel pride in me lusting against humility. O my precious Jesus! humble me under thy mighty hand. To thee I look for all my salvation. Lord, save me from pride. Thou hast made me willing to be taught of thee to be meek and lowly, and I come to thee praying that the disciple may be as his master. Oh let me drink deep into thy Spirit. In every day's warfare against my corruptions, enable me to renounce myself, that I may find thou art carrying both me and my cross. Keep me humbled at thy feet, that thou mayest exalt me in due time. I pray to thee, my precious Saviour, for this grace, to mine eternal humbling, and to thine eternal exaltation. In life and death, and for evermore, I hope to glory only in the Lord, and to triumph in the God of my salvation.

Thus the believer learns to walk humbly under the inward cross. He is

brought to trust all in the Saviour's hand. Daily he discovers more of the ruins of the fall, which lead him to fresh discoveries of the perfect salvation in Jesus. If he attend to what is passing in his own breast, he finds his need of a Saviour every moment and for every thing, by which means he grows in grace, and in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He learns to put no confidence in the flesh, but to rejoice only in his completeness in Jesus, from whom all his comforts and victories are received. Thus, while self is laid low, the Saviour is exalted, and his perfect work is more depended on. The believer by hope and love attains more delightful communion with his God. Indwelling sin is his cross; but he bears it, looking unto Jesus; from whom he receives strength to go on, yea, to run the race set before him. By faith he sees in Jesus the corruption of his nature condemned and dead in law: he beholds himself freed from this as well as from his other sins. Guilt is the most galling part of this cross; but when guilt is thus removed from the conscience, then the cross grows light. When taken up in faith, and carried in love to the almighty Saviour, then it does not stop the believer in his fellowship with Jesus or in his happy walk with him. Glory be to thee, my Lord! of this I have some experience. Yes, precious Jesus, I know the infinite value of that sacrifice which put away sin. I bless thee for that offering which perfects for ever. Interested in it, I would not distrust my completeness in thee. Through thy holy nature I expect to be renewed after thy likeness. The fountain for cleansing from the filth of sin stands open: in it I daily wash my spotted soul. In thy divine righteousness I see the law and justice of the Father infinitely honoured by justifying me, and dealing with me, as perfectly righteous. Complete in thee I am. In thy work finished upon earth I am perfect, and am represented as such by thee in heaven. I believe thou appearest there as my divine intercessor, bearing my name upon thy shoulders and upon thy breast with a glory beyond all the precious stones in the world, O my blessed Jesus! increase this faith. Lead me from faith to faith; that while I am travelling heavenwards, mine eye and my heart may be more simply fixed upon thee. Come, thou glorifier of the Saviour, and discover to me more of the sinfulness of sin and of my need of his salvation. Holy Spirit, teach me, in the deepest sense of indwelling sin, to trust wholly to the offering of the body of Jesus. Oh lead me to his cross, there to see all my sins nailed, crucified with him, dead in his death, buried in his grave: in this faith strengthen me mightily to resist and to conquer my corruptions. Enable me to experience the power of his cross, that I may feel sin weakened in the love and in the practice of it. Almighty Spirit! in my daily warfare I find no strength less than thine can make me conqueror: and therein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old! Art thou not it that cut the pride of nature to pieces, and wounded the old dragon? O my God, magnify thine arm in subduing every sin. Thou seest my naked heart, and its sighings are not hid from thee. My corruptions are indeed my cross; and they would have been a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear, if the curse had not been taken out of them. But still, pardoned as they are, yet in this tabernacle I do groan, being burdened. I believe the day is coming when I shall have perfect and eternal freedom from sin and sorrow. The first fruits of this only make me long the more for the blessed harvest. But I desire to wait in hope, bearing my cross, till thy will be done. O Lord, make me willing to resist; give me power to overcome indwelling sin till the day of redemption, and mortality be swallowed up of life. Hear me, my good God, and answer me for thy name's sake, to the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, to whom my heart now bows in worship, and my soul hopes soon to join the song of never-ceasing praise. *Amen* and *Amen.*

CHAPTER XI.

The believer fights the good fight of faith, and goes forth conquering and to conquer.

When the believer has been disciplined under the cross, and has learned to bear it with patience, the Captain of his salvation has other exercises for him. He has chosen him to be a soldier, and he intends to teach him to endure hardness. His life in Christ is one continued battle, not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers of earth and hell. He cannot discover their stratagems, nor overcome their assaults, but by being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His warfare is therefore to be carried on entirely by faith. The principles before laid down must be brought into use. What the spirit of God had discovered to him of his salvation in Jesus is to be tried in every battle, and if it be maintained, it will be improved. If he hold fast the confidence of his faith, he will behave like a good soldier. If he always take up arms in absolute dependence on the divine General to give him courage, to order him how to attack his enemies, to bestow strength upon him daily to resist them, then victory will be certain: yea, he will be invincible, while he stands strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. He will meditate upon the principles, which he had been taught of God, and will find peace in his own conscience, and joy in his heart, by bringing them into daily experience. His believing views of the warfare to which he is called will be such as these—

I am, through sovereign grace, called to fight under the banner of Jesus. He has not left me to fight as uncertainly; but he has conquered all mine enemies for me, and he has undertaken to conquer them all in me. It is true, I am weak; but my Redeemer is strong: the Lord of hosts is his name. He has saved me from my sins, from the shame and pain of them, from the wicked one and the wicked world, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God. He has given me a divine righteousness for my justification, and in it I am accepted before the throne. He has put it upon me for ornament and defence—it is a garment of salvation, which cannot be lost upon earth, and which will shine with never-fading beauty in heaven. The Father is perfectly reconciled, and loves me with a love that passes knowledge. I believe it: God is on my side: I need not fear what any enemy can do unto me. He has taken me into his protection. By his all-wise counsel I am guided; by his almighty arm I am defended. My battles are the Lord's. Indeed my enemies are many, and they are too cunning and too mighty for me. But why do they now fight against me? Is it not because God is my friend? They hate me because he loves me. While I lived in friendship with them, and was at war with God, they were always trying to make me happy. But, ever since I fled to Jesus for refuge, and sought redemption in his blood, they have taken up arms against me: and they have raged more furiously since I was enabled to believe in him. But I have no reason to fear their opposition. With them is an arm of flesh; but with me is the Lord my God, to help me and to fight my battles. I may therefore go to my daily warfare in faith, regarding the commands, waiting for the fulfilling of the promises of my God, and relying upon the provision which he has made for my present and for mine eternal victory.

Are thy meditations, O my soul, like these upon the Christian warfare? Examine thyself. If thou art at peace with God, thou must expect war. It is unavoidable. If it be in thy heart to please him who hath chosen thee to be a soldier, then all the powers of wickedness will be in arms. Night and day, with never ceasing rage, they will pursue thee. Deep-laid plans will be formed, and fierce assaults will be made against thy true happiness. They will be attempting, so long as thou art in the world, by some cunning or force to draw thee from thy God. Thy life from henceforth is to be one continued battle. Thy victory depends every moment upon holding fast thy confidence in God; and therefore thou must bring the principles of the doctrine of Christ into exercise. Thou hast seen how necessary they are for every step of thy walk, and thou wilt find

them equally necessary for every part of thy warfare. This is a leading truth—thine enemies are God's enemies. Once thou didst join with them, and wast on their side, fighting against God; but he has saved thee from the guilt of thy rebellion. In free love he chose thee in his Son, and in sovereign mercy gave him for thee. The Son rejoiced to do his Father's will for thy salvation: he did it in his life: he suffered it in his death. The ever-glorious work is finished. And it has been given thee on the behalf of Christ to believe. The Lord the Spirit has satisfied thy conscience, and has comforted thy heart with the knowledge of this perfect salvation. The Father is thy Father in Jesus—thine by his own free gift—thine by his own unchangeable purpose; and now thine by thy free choice. He has made thee willing, in the day of his power, to take him for thy God. He is perfectly reconciled unto thee in his Son: and should not this perfectly reconcile thee to him? His love to thee is wonderful in all its properties, in its rise and origin, and in its free and full communication of every covenant blessing. And does not the belief of this engage thy heart in love to God? Dost thou not love him for his love to thee? and is it not thy daily prayer that thy love may abound yet more and more? Has not the sense of this peace and love been improved in thy daily walk with him? Hast thou not found the truth, and enjoyed the comfort, of these graces in thine experience? Oh fear not then, since God is on thy side; fear not, O my soul, to go to war with any enemy who would rob thee of the peace of God in thy conscience, or of the love of God in thy heart. This is the design of all those who fight against thee. They want to shake thy confidence in God, and so to draw thee from him. They know they cannot succeed while thou standest strong in the Lord, trusting to his being thy reconciled God and loving Father. Oh keep this trust in him as the apple of thine eye; bind it continually to thy heart in love; and fight for it as for thy precious life. Be assured, no enemies can prevail against thee until they have first overcome thy faith; because, while thou makest God thy refuge and strength, his almighty arm will be thy defence. Be not afraid, says he; I am with thee, and I will keep thee by my power through faith unto salvation.

In this warfare it is the chief business of the believer to have respect to the orders given him. He is entirely to depend on the Captain of his salvation. What has he said, O my soul, to encourage thee to go to battle without fear? Mind his description—it is THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, in which thou art engaged. By faith thou art to attack thy foes; by faith alone thou canst conquer them; and faith must have his

COMMANDS; or else it can have no lawful warrant to fight, and no just ground to expect victory. Indeed if he had spoken nothing, there could have been no faith; for his word comes first—it is spoken—it is heard—and then faith comes by hearing. Look well, then, to his word. Study it carefully. If thou obey it aright, thou art absolutely safe in the hottest battle, and thy victory is as certain as if the crown were already upon thy head. These are his standing orders:—"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not afraid; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought; for the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee—fear not; I will help thee. Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel." Are these indeed the words of God? Does he command poor worms, weak and defenceless, to go to war without fear? Does he encourage them to look up to his arm, promising to be on their side? Yes; the Lord of hosts fights for them: all their enemies are his, and therefore they may safely trust, and not be afraid. O my soul, read carefully; read again and again; mark and inwardly digest every word of this divine command: and in obedience to it expect his help. Face thine enemies, whoever they be, with holy boldness; for God is with thee. He has undertaken to fight thy battles. Look at this scripture. Canst thou meditate on it, and yet be afraid? Of whom, or of what? Oh

vile unbelieving fear! Beg of God to save thee from it. Honour the Captain of thy salvation. Trust him. Doubt not but thou art as safe, obeying his orders, and expecting his help, as almighty power can make thee. Observe the courage of one of thy fellow soldiers. Observe his victory—"When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies be turned back: this I know; for God is on my side. In God will I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his word: in God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me." The enemies of David came to swallow him up, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He attended to his orders. He considered the word which was spoken to him. He depended upon it, and had reason to praise God for his faithfulness; for God fulfilled it unto him. There was in it a

PROMISE, as well as a command—Do this, and I will be with thee. The promise is always made good to them who keep the command in faith. The one is our divine warrant to fight; the other is our encouragement to fight in certain hopes of victory. Attend, O my soul, to the promise; and fear not the accomplishment of it—"In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise in judgment against thee thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me saith the Lord." Thou art here forewarned of thine enemies: they *shall* gather against thee: but the Lord is not with them. He is thy defender and mighty deliverer, and he will bring all opposition to nought for thy sake. However numerous their hosts may be, yet they shall fall. Whatever weapons of war they may form, yet none of them shall prosper. This is the certain heritage of all believers. Their righteousness and their strength is of me, saith the Lord: I will fight their battles, and I will never leave them nor forsake them: I will make them daily conquerors, and behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised them: I will make them more than conquerors.

Is this, O my soul, the infallible word of promise? Has the Lord of Hosts undertaken to stand by his people? Has he engaged to lead them out to war by his wisdom, to defend them in battle by his power, and to give them eternal victory to the praise of his own grace? Oh! what motives are these to strengthen thy heart and thy hands! What hast thou reason to fear, since the Almighty is on thy side? The battle is his. If hosts of enemies oppose, yet following his orders, and trusting to his strength, thy victory is infallibly sure: for then thou wilt fight against them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and thou wilt be invincible

IN THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD. This armour is the provision which God has made for the safety of his soldiers. He puts it on them, and he keeps it on them. It is a whole armour; a complete defence from head to foot. In great mercy their God, who provided it, has revealed to them the use of every part. In the sixth of the Ephesians the apostle has described it at large. He supposes them to be acquainted with the Christian doctrines, and to have walked in the comfort of them; and he calls upon them to bring them into practice in their daily warfare. "It only remains, my brethren," says he, "that ye be strong in the Lord;" for no strength less than his can keep you, "and in the might of what he is able to do"—by faith relying upon his promise, and trusting to his power, "putting on the whole armour of God," that, being strengthened mightily by his Spirit in the inner man, ye may be preserved dependent upon the Lord, and enabled to engage in his strength, and to conquer to his glory. Unless you thus rely upon his word and arm, you will not be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places; therefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be enabled to stand in the evil day

against the combined legions of earth and hell, and after ye have done all to stand conquerors in the field of battle, when your enemies are driven out of it. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth—this is the first grace in use—

SAVING KNOWLEDGE; what the Holy Spirit teaches. He guides believers into all truth necessary for their salvation. As the military girdle went round the loins, and bound all the armour together, so the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, binds together all the graces. It is of the essence of every one of them: it is light in the understanding, to discover what they are, that they may be received into the heart in love, and that, in obeying the truth, their influence may operate upon the life and conversation. When a man is thus taught of God, then he sees his need of the breastplate of righteousness, and he puts it on; namely, the

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS of the God-man. The breastplate was armour for the vital parts—so is the righteousness of Christ—it is a perfect protection from every stroke of every enemy. He that wears it upon his heart, believing in the life and death of Immanuel, is armour proof against all weapons. If the strength of his adversaries could be collected into one arm, which was to strike one mighty blow, his breastplate would ward it off: the armour of God could not be hurt. The soldier, with it on, cannot perish, but shall have everlasting life. Therefore, covered with this invincible breastplate, he may face the stoutest foes, and attack them without fear. He may march on undaunted, "having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

PEACE WITH GOD, through Jesus Christ, is another grace of the Spirit which mightily strengthens the inner man. Whoever sees the truth of the gospel, and believes it, will discover God to be at peace with him, perfectly reconciled to him in Jesus, and who, out of his fatherly love, will overrule all things for his good. In the sense of this he may go on with holy boldness, as the soldier did with his greaves on. When his feet and legs were armed with them, he was not afraid of thorns or briers, of rough roads or sharp spikes. In like manner the peace which the gospel brings carries the Christian soldier fearless through difficulties: he will march on conquering, if he keep on his greaves. If he maintain peace with God, through Jesus Christ, he will not be stopped by war, or trouble, or temptation. But he must remember, that to every piece of armour faith is essentially necessary—the girdle is good for nothing without the belief of the truth—the breastplate is no defence without faith in the righteousness of God our Saviour—the greaves are no more than if the feet were covered with a bit of thin gauze—unless faith be mixed with the gospel: "therefore TO ALL THESE take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." What excellent things are here spoken of

FAITH, as a grace of the Holy Spirit! When they used to fight with bows and arrows, the soldier could hold up his shield and keep himself safe: so the Christian soldier, if the fiery darts of Satan fly thick about him, by faith will quench them all. He has much combustible within him; and one spark would set him in a flame if he had not his shield: but, armed with it, and opposing it to the arrows of the wicked one, he may lift up his head with joy; *for he has the helmet of salvation* upon it. The grace here meant is

HOPE, and it is fitly compared to a helmet, which was armour for the head, and a defence for all the senses which are seated in the head. It is called the helmet of SALVATION, because it ALWAYS SAVES. It never can be destroyed: none of the senses of the spiritual man can perish in this warfare: and therefore it is a hope that maketh not ashamed. Hope, with his helmet on, fears no blows. It can truly say, I am commanded to be strong and of good courage; not to be afraid or dismayed: for the Lord my God is with me, whithersoever I go. Trusting to this command, hope is in wars and fightings full of glory and immortality. The Lord's orders to march forward are the ground of hope: and this supplies him with a weapon which none of his enemies can withstand, even the sword of the Spirit, "which is the

WORD OF GOD." The scripture is called a sword—(an offensive weapon—and it is the only one which the Christian soldier has—all the rest being for his defence) because it is mighty through the Spirit working by it to cut off all opposers.

Our Lord, in combat with the old serpent, defeated him with this sword: and the noble army of his followers, now crowned in glory, overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and *by the word of their testimony:* they held fast their confidence in the word, and with it, as with a two-edged sword, they slew the old dragon, and gained eternal victory over him. Fight against him, O my soul, with the same weapon. Keep the sword in thy hand. Thou wilt stand in need of it every moment against that subtle foe. The Word is the means of overcoming the devil, and it is mighty through God, when heard and read in faith, and inwardly digested by prayer. The best soldier in the Lord's army is best acquainted with the necessity of prayer: he not only believes what God says of his armour, but he also depends upon him for the daily experience of it; and therefore, when he has put his armour on, in the

Prayer of Faith he calls upon the Captain of his salvation for orders, courage, strength, victory, and every thing needful—"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." O my God, teach me thus to pray. I would depend on thee, and express my dependence without ceasing: for I am sensible that without thee I can do nothing. Although thou hast chosen me to be a soldier, yet I have neither counsel nor strength for war. My foolish heart loves ease: it would have the crown; but it would be excused striving lawfully for it. I find nothing in myself that disposes me to endure the hardship of the Christian warfare. My whole trust therefore is in thee, Jesus, my Lord and my God. Thou hast called me to the battle: thou must fit me for it, keep me in it, and make me conqueror. All is of thee. The whole armour of God, which I have received, the saving knowledge, the righteousness, and the peace, that precious faith and glorious hope, that sure word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust—these are the gifts of thy grace; and on thee, my Jesus, I entirely depend for the right use of them. Thou must still cover my head in the day of battle. Mine eyes are lifted up to thee; my hopes centre in thee, from whom alone cometh all my salvation. O Lord of Hosts, keep me in this simple dependence upon thy word and arm, that I may exercise thy graces in fighting thy battles; and if thou art pleased to give me daily victory, I may be willing to return thee all glory. O faithful promise-keeping God! stand by me, and enable me to hold out, till I finish my course with joy, and, my warfare being ended, I may bless thee for evermore for that peace which passeth all understanding. Oh, grant me this for thy mercies' sake! *Amen.*

If this be thy dependence, if thou art standing in the Lord's strength, and trusting entirely to his armour, then consider, O my soul, thy safety in every battle. If thou go to war, calling upon thy God to be with thee, and to give thee victory, then victory is certain. Thou canst not be conquered, if thou fight in faith, relying upon the orders of thy General, expecting his promised help, and waiting for it in prayer, trusting to the armour which he has put upon thee. Is this, then, thy defence? Dost thou *pray always?* Begin the good fight; carry it on; and end it with the prayer of faith? Blessed be his holy name, since this is in some measure thy case! Go on in his strength, and fear not to fight his battles who hath chosen thee to be a soldier. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart. The more bold thou art in thy faith, the stronger shalt thou be in thy warfare; for whatever thou hast courage to do at his command thou shalt perform in his strength. And why should a doubt arise? Hast thou forgotten that the great decisive battle has been fought and won? Immanuel stood up, the great champion for his people. The almighty warrior entered the lists with their enemies, and he conquered all their hosts. He triumphed over Satan and the world, over sin and death; and he led captivity captive. Remember, he calls upon thee to share in his victory, by faith to partake with him of the spoils, and to keep the vanquished enemies daily under thy feet. He has made them his footstool; and he will make them thine. This is thy warfare. And what hast thou to fear in it? What hurt can a dead man do thee? If he has a gun charged in his hand, he cannot fire it. He is not able to stir a finger. No more able is any adversary to destroy thee. Whilst thou art trusting to the complete victory of Jesus, thou wilt daily share with him in it. And the more simple

thy trust is in him, the greater conquest will he give thee, because he will then receive from thee greater glory. How should this consideration inspire thee with courage!--it is for his glory that thou shouldst conquer. Thy God commands thee to fight on his side, promises to assist thee, has provided invincible armour, and has in his own person engaged and defeated every enemy against whom thou art to fight; and therefore he requires thee, in obedience to his orders, depending on his promises and armour, to bring him glory by conquering in his strength. O my soul! hast thou not a zeal to promote the honour of thy Saviour? Is not his fame and renown very near thy heart? Dost thou not think it a privilege to be any ways instrumental in exalting his great name? Yes, Lord; thou hast made me willing to glorify thee. Thou art my lawful king, and I desire to honour thee by following thine orders, fighting thy battles, and relying entirely upon thy promises. I would not question thy faithfulness to them, nor fear any enemy against whom thou hast commanded me to fight. I would not doubt of thy strength to carry me through the battle, or to give me the promised victory. In this faith I conduct my warfare, and I would have all my success to bring fresh glory to thee. I know that the courage which I have in the field of battle is not from nature, but from grace. It arises from the belief that I am armed with the whole armour of God, and that the enemies against whom I fight are his as well as mine—his whom he conquered for me—and is now conquering in me—and all to his own praise. From hence, Lord, arises my sure and certain hope of victory. I ground it on thy word. I fight in faith. I trust to thy complete victory; and now I am sharing in it. My daily victories are only the fruit and effect of thine. O my almighty Jesus, give me grace to ascribe all the glory to thee. It is thy due. Make me willing to give it thee for the victories obtained for me, and in me. Oh, keep me by thine almighty power through faith, till I have fought the good fight and won the prize. Grant me this, blessed King of saints, to thine eternal honour and glory. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XII.

The believer marches on fighting the good fight of faith, and daily gains victory over the world.

The world signifies the visible frame of nature; not the earth only, but also the present constitution of the universe of animate and inanimate beings: all which were created good at first, but, through the sin of man and the just sentence of God, are now subject to vanity.

The world is become a great enemy to fallen man; because it is always presenting something to his senses, which is a temptation to sin. It keeps him from God by its flatteries, promising to make him happy in its enjoyments. It sets them before him. He looks, and loves. He gives his heart a willing sacrifice to the world, and suffers himself to be entirely influenced by its hopes and fears.

While man was innocent, every object raised in him some spiritual idea, and thereby led him to contemplate and adore the great Creator in his works: but, upon the fall, he lost this use of natural objects: they did not, as they struck upon the senses, excite correspondent ideas in the mind; because the man was alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in him. His understanding was in darkness: he could not see the things of the spirit of God; neither indeed could he know them for want of spiritual discernment. Being thus deprived of the image and likeness of God in knowledge, having no will but the will of the flesh, and his heart being at enmity with God, he sinks into communion with the creature. His very mind is carnal: his affections are earthly: his pursuits are after temporal things: his enjoyments are in the delights of sense. In this state he lives a mere animal life, without God in the world.

Indeed he has within him an immortal soul; but it is apostate. It is fallen from God, and has no more communion with him by nature than the devil has.

The law has condemned it to death—The soul that sinneth shall die: and it is already spiritually dead to God, being as incapable of quickening itself as a dead corpse is: therefore it cannot attain, of itself, any true knowledge of God, or have any real fellowship with the things of God. While fallen man is in this state, his earthly and sensual appetites take the lead; and all the light in his mind, and the desires of his heart, only dispose him to seek for their present gratification. Outward objects offer themselves to him: they make an impression upon his senses, and sometimes act upon them very forcibly, soliciting and enticing to the enjoyment of some fancied good; and so long as he continues an unregenerate man, those temptations prevail, and keep him from God. He does not see God in outward objects. He does not love God for them. He does not enjoy them to the glory of God. God is not in all his thoughts.

Man has been called a microcosm. He is so wonderfully made, that the whole creation comes under the observation of some of his senses. His eye, by means of light, can discover the form, the surface of all objects. The ear takes in all sounds. The nose perceives all vapours and smells. The palate tastes all sorts of fluids. All sorts of solids come under the sense of feeling, which is in every part of the body, for the benefit and preservation of the whole. Thus every object in the universe is fitted to act upon some of the senses, and was intended by the Creator to excite some spiritual idea. But this use was lost by the fall. The impression made by outward objects does not raise up the mind to God, and excite adoration and praise, but keeps the heart from him, and affords a continual temptation to live to the world, and to the things of it. Whatever is presented to the eye, to the ear, &c. can stir up and bring forth evil; and actually does, according to the scripture: for "the whole world (as fallen from God) lieth in wickedness," and is at enmity with him; and therefore believers are commanded —"Love ye not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Mind, ALL that is in the world is the means of feeding some lust: for which reason the apostle calls it—"this present evil world" —evil because of sin, and because of its temptations to keep the heart in love with it, and to shut out the love of the Father.

How awfully solemn are these scriptures? What strict examination, O my soul, should they put thee upon! Search and try thyself by them; and see whether thou art saved from the love of the world. It is a blessed part of redemption; and it is one of the brightest jewels in the Redeemer's crown. How infinitely glorious is this character!—"Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." This deliverance is worthy of God. We had sinned by loving this present evil world, and he came to save us from our sins; it ruled over our hearts and lives, and kept us under its tyranny; and he came to deliver us from the love and from the power of it. Thrice happy are they for whom he thus gave himself. O my soul, read and study the everlasting honours of this great victory, and see whether thou art indeed a partaker of them. Jehovah was made flesh for his people, and, as their divine surety, came to conquer their enemies—the world among the rest. He was in their nature to enter into open war with it, and to overcome every temptation, by which it had drawn Adam or any of his descendants from God. Thus he was to conquer the world *for* them; and then by his Spirit he was to conquer it *in* them. He began the battle with his first breath, and every moment of his life he was victorious. The world has its snares for every age and state; but he fell into none of them: his hands were clean: his heart was pure. He never lifted up his soul to vanity. He was in his infancy *the holy child* Jesus: and he grew in wisdom and stature. When he was twelve years old, he was wiser than his teachers; for he sat in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions: and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. His delight was in the law of the Lord; and in his law did he meditate day and night. He saw things as they are there described in their true nature. The world could not impose upon him. He lived above its offers of good: and he feared not the worst of its threatened

evils. When he began his ministry, he fought a pitched battle and became an eternal conqueror. The prince of this world was permitted to try every object by which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, had seduced mankind. They were presented to Christ in their richest dress. The beauty, the pleasure, the honour, and the riches of the world were set before him in all their glory. But they made no impression. They did not darken his understanding, nor influence his heart, nor provoke any sensual appetite. He rejected every pleasing offer: he withstood every flattering allurement. Thus he conquered the world; but not for himself. His victory over all its temptations was for his people. He accounted their enemies his. He fought their battles. He conquered, as a king for his subjects. And he gives them to share with him in his triumph, when they believe in him; for thus he encourages them—"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good courage; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD." The world is your enemy. It had you in bondage, and you could not free yourselves; therefore I came in your nature, God manifest in the flesh, to conquer it for you: and I have obtained a perfect conquest. When I have proclaimed it to your consciences, and pardoned your idolatrous attachment to the world—when IN me ye have found peace—yet still the world will be your enemy. Because I have chosen you out of it, therefore it will hate you. My peace will occasion and increase your tribulation in it; but fear not. Remember, it is a vanquished foe. Attack it in my strength, as partakers of my victory. Fight against it, and treat it as under my feet and made my footstool. Whenever it tempts you, depend absolutely upon my conquest, and you will find my grace almighty to crucify the world to you, and you to it.

How animating are these words! With what courage should they inspire the Christian soldier! Although the world be his enemy, yet it cannot conquer him, and rob him of his crown. The main battle has been fought, the victory is gained, and the conqueror is already crowned in the name and person of all the redeemed. By faith he gives them their share in this victory, as it is written—"Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world—even our faith." Every person who is born again by the Spirit, has a new nature, spiritual and heavenly, and has new senses to exercise about spiritual things. His renewed faculties are formed for heavenly things, as his bodily senses are for material. By faith he sees a better world than this, and surveys its beauties and glories. He has ears to hear the joyful sound of gospel grace, and to receive it. When that name, which is dear and precious above every name, is preached, it is to him as ointment poured forth: the sweet smelling savour refreshes his heart and exhilarates his spirits. Then he tastes that the Lord is gracious—foretastes his heavenly love, and as truly lays hold of and enjoys its spiritual blessings as he ever did of any thing material. He is created anew in Christ Jesus, not only that he may know these things, but may also partake of them—as truly now by faith, as he ever will by sense: and the more he knows, and the more he partakes of them, the more will he be delivered from this present evil world; "For this is the victory that overcometh the world—even our faith." By faith we see the victory of Christ, and rest upon it; and the more safely we put our trust and confidence in it, the more fellowship we shall have with him in his fruits—more wisdom to see the vanity of the world, as he saw it—more grace to deliver us from the love of it—and more strength to subdue its temptations. These are some of the happy effects of his conquests, which he left us to enjoy here, as pledges of our being one day what he now is. He is more than conqueror; so shall we be through him that loveth us. As our faith increases, we shall share more with him, and triumph more over the smiles and frowns of the world. Since this is the only way to conquer the world, art thou, O my soul, conquering it in this way? and hast thou faith in the victory of Jesus? Dost thou depend on him for the pardon of thy former love of the world, and for the crucifying the love of it in thy heart? Art thou relying upon his victorious grace to make thee a daily conqueror over all its temptations? Examine thy warfare, and see whether it be carried on ac-

cording to the scripture rule, and with the promised success. Look at some of the Lord's champions. Survey the triumphs of Moses, and remember, the Lord's hand is not shortened—"By FAITH Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." How great was this faith! how glorious its victories! It was a divine grace, and exercised by a divine operation—mighty through God. By it Moses saw the reality of heavenly things: by it he tasted their sweetness, enjoyed their blessedness, and had a hope full of glory and immortality. The world made him its highest offers; but he rejected them. His eye was kept single, his heart chaste, towards his God. The honour of Pharaoh's alliance he despised. He preferred affliction with the people of God to the pleasures of sin. He embraced reproach when it came on him for following Christ; and he esteemed it beyond all the treasures of Egypt. He saw the vanity and emptiness of earthly enjoyments, and he trampled upon them, having respect to the recompense of reward. Thus he was crucified to the world. What an exalted character! There is no such hero in the records of profane history; but, thank God! there are great numbers in sacred, who followed the steps of his faith. Every soldier of Christ Jesus is called to war against the world; and every good soldier is a daily conqueror. The world is always present, and has its temptations ready to stop him; but he meets them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, trusting to the whole armour of God. Then victory is certain. And in order that the Lord may have all the glory, he will keep him fighting and praying in this manner:—

This world is not my portion. My happiness does not consist in loving and enjoying the things of it. It is an evil world; it lieth in wickedness; Satan has his seat and throne in it; and it is condemned to fire. Thank God! mine eyes are opened to see a better world than this; and I am travelling to it. I believe it was the purpose and will of the Eternal Three to choose me to be an heir of the world to come. Glory be to the Father for his free choice, and for all the blessings of his love! Glory be to the coequal Son for his complete and everlastingly perfect salvation! Glory be to the Eternal Spirit to whom I am indebted for what I believe of the Son's salvation, and for what I have experienced of the Father's love. On thee, O God the Holy Ghost, I place my dependence for carrying on the work which thou hast begun. I would be guided by thy counsel every step of my walk, and strengthened by thee for every part of my warfare. Keep me in the right way; and make me conqueror over all the enemies who would stop me in it, or turn me out of it: especially, deliver me from this present evil world. While I am going through it to a better, preserve my heart from the love of it. O my God! give me a stranger's temper, and a pilgrim's frame. Let me live as a sojourner here below, that the good things I meet with on my journey may not tempt me to make this my rest, and the evil things I meet with may not lead me to fret and murmur, as if God was not my Father, and his heaven my home. O thou divine Teacher! show me daily the glory of my Saviour's victory over the world, that I may share with him in it; and enable me to go forth conquering and to conquer in his strength, and to his praise. Help me to look upon the world, and to treat it, as he did, that, feeling the emptiness of its offered happiness, I may with a single heart cleave to my Father in Jesus, and may be saved from the spirit of the world. Keep me waiting for my appointed time, sitting quite loose and free to the things about me—and let heavenly and eternal things be always present to my faith, in their reality and blessedness, that I may grow more alive to them, and more dead to every thing else. Preserve my heart, O my gracious God! that it may be simple with thee when I am in my worldly business. Enable me to cast all my cares and burdens on thee, believing thou carest for me. Oh, daily crucify the world to me, and me to it, that, when its offers stand in competition with thy love, I may have grace to reject them. In this holy war, carry me on glorifying him who hath called me to be a soldier Grant me this for Jesus' sake, *Amen* and *Amen*.

CHAPTER XIII.

The believer marches on resisting and overcoming the wiles and the assaults of the tempter.

SATAN is a continual adversary. He rebelled against the sovereign will of the Most High in heaven, and was cast out. As soon as man was formed, he began to tempt him to rebel against God, and he succeeded. Ever since the revelation was made of the divine purpose to redeem sinners, he has set himself up against it, and with impotent rage opposed it. He is always trying to hinder sinners from coming to the Saviour, and, when they are come to him, to hinder them from living by faith upon his fulness. On the side of Satan are principalities and powers, combined armies and united legions of apostate spirits,—formidable to man for their number—more so for their subtlety and cunning—they have stratagems and wiles, depths of skill to deceive—in which they are so successful that they have deceived the whole world. Their courage is desperate. They fear nothing; for they were mad enough to take up arms against the Almighty. No wonder, then, that they should be unwearied in their attacks against man. They are always upon the watch—ready, as one temptation fails, to present another. Their strength is very great—they are called principalities and powers—rulers and princes—yea, the god of this world; because they work as they please in the children of disobedience, whom they keep so fast bound in the chains of sin, that no human arm can break them asunder. And it is the only joy they know—the joy of hell—to rivet the chains of sin upon these poor captives, till they bind them in everlasting chains of darkness.

These, O my soul, are thine enemies. They had drawn thee into their rebellion, and they are still trying to draw thee into their torments. They have free access to thy fallen nature. They know how to make use of the objects in the world to work upon thy senses, and to stir up evil thoughts. They have fiery darts always at hand to throw at thy faith, and rest not, night and day, in attacking thy peace and happiness in Jesus.

Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy name, for undertaking to save thee from those enemies. The love of the Father gave his Son to be the woman's seed—Jehovah incarnate—for his people. In their nature he was to bruise the head of the serpent: his cunning, his poison, and all his power to hurt, lie in his head: when this is bruised, he is defeated; the battle to be fought was foretold, and the victory to be won was promised to Adam: and by faith in it he and all the redeemed in the Old Testament conquered Satan. In the fulness of time God was manifest in the flesh: he came to destroy the works of the devil. Sin is his great work: by it he drew man from God, and by it he keeps man from God. Immanuel begun the destruction of the works of the devil by taking human nature. His manhood was perfectly holy—it had not, it could not have, any sin; because God was in Christ.

There was every thing in his holy life which the law could require. He obeyed all its precepts with uninterrupted conformity, and being coequal and coeternal with the Father, his obedience was therefore divine, absolutely complete, and infinitely sufficient to justify for ever. He was tempted indeed, but he overcame every temptation. He defeated Satan in all his attempts, insomuch that when he was entering upon the last scene of his life, he could declare—"The prince of this world cometh, AND HATH NOTHING IN ME." He did come, and the great pitched battle was fought, which was to decide for ever, whether the seed of the woman or the serpent, should be crowned conqueror. The battle began in the garden of Gethsemane, and was finished upon Mount Calvary. Every stratagem of infernal policy was then tried; every assault of devilish malice was exerted against the Captain of our salvation; but he conquered them all, as it was foretold—"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet." He trod upon the serpent's head, and crushed it, but at the same time the serpent bit his heel.

The heel is the lowest part, his body—this fell in the conflict, but he completed his victory by the loss of his life. The apostle speaks of the cross, upon which he bled and died, as the great scene of this engagement, and on which he vanquished and triumphed for ever over the powers of hell: having spoiled principalities and powers, and taken away all their armour wherein they trusted, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them upon the cross, leading them as you would captives in chains; rebels still, but unable to rob the Lord Christ of the glory of any part of his conquest. Thus through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil. O blessed and Almighty Jesus! eternal thanks are due to thee for this most glorious victory. Satan is now a vanquished foe. He is under thy feet, thou highly-exalted head of the redeemed. Thou hast for them, and in their stead, overcome all his wiles and assaults. He may tempt, but he cannot conquer them. He has no right to accuse them—thou hast made an end of sin. He has no power to torment them—thou hast brought in everlasting righteousness. He cannot pluck them out of thy hands—they are dear to thee, and kept as the apple of thine eye. Glory be to thee! thou wilt soon bring them out of the reach of his temptations, and thou wilt be to them an eternal and infinitely perfect Saviour.

In this faith, O my soul, thou art called upon to take up arms against the old serpent. Thou art to fight against him under the banner of JESUS—a name terrible to the devil and his angels. Trusting to the victory of Jesus for thee, and to the strength of Jesus working in thee, thou art daily to bring him honour and renown. How safe, how blessed is such a warfare! Thou hast the wisdom of thy God and Saviour to discover to thee the wiles of Satan. Trust to it, O my soul. Leave thyself simply to his direction; and although Satan be subtle and cunning—although he has depths of policy, and plans out of number, yet thou shalt not be ignorant of his devices. Thy all-knowing Saviour will detect his plots, and turn the counsel of that Ahitophel into folly. And if he attack thee as a roaring lion, yet fear him not. Thy Redeemer is strong. He has bruised the serpent's head; resist him in faith, and thou shalt bruise it also. Lean on the arm of thy Jesus; depend on his promised strength; follow his orders, and thou shalt tread Satan under thy feet daily.

But, above all, remember that thou canst only conquer him by faith—by faith in the victory of Jesus, built upon thy faith in the word of Jesus: for thus the scripture testifies of the conquerors now round the throne, "that they overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony"—they overcame him by depending upon the atoning blood, and by trusting to what the word says of its all-sufficiency to save; and they found by experience the promised victory. To the same effect the apostle Peter stirs up believers to a sobriety in the use of all creature comforts, and to a continual watchfulness against their enemies, in order that they might daily conquer—"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist STEADFAST IN THE FAITH." This brings victory. The believer resists the devil, and stands against him steadfastly in the power of Christ This power is almighty, and therefore faith, relying upon it, infallibly secures victory. The devil may throw his fiery darts thick and fast, but the shield of faith is proof against them. It is able, through God, to quench them; so that the fire of temptation shall not inflame the soul. How precious are these scriptures! How encouraging to the Christian soldier! they promise him every thing needful for the battle, and for victory. Why, then, shouldst thou doubt, O my soul, of the promised blessings? Take courage; fight under the banner of Jesus; keep close to his colours; follow strictly his orders; and he will keep Satan under thy feet to-day, and thou shalt be more than conqueror over him for ever.

Considering thy war with Satan in this light, what is there in it, O my soul, to stop thee in thy way to heaven? Thou art called upon to fight against him; but then it is in the Lord's strength, and as a partaker of his conquest. He made all thine enemies his. He fought thy battles. His triumph is thine. Thou mayst therefore sing of victory before every battle. Thou dost not fight to gain the pardon of thy sins or to make thyself righteous, but to oppose thine

adversary, who would draw thee into sin, and, if he could, would rob thee of thy righteousness. He hates thee because Christ loves thee. But his hatred is in vain. Thy Saviour has conquered him for thee, and by faith will conquer him in thee: for thou art kept by his almighty power. Trusting to this, go forth strong in the Lord. While thou art living in communion with him, thy warfare will be successful. If thou attend to his word, and follow his orders, he will encourage thy heart and strengthen thy hands with such promises as these:—

I have chosen thee to be a soldier; and I send thee out to fight against all the enemies of thy peace. But thou dost not go to this warfare at thine own charges, nor carry it on doubtful of victory. I have provided every thing needful for maintaining the battle, and for bringing thee off conqueror. Thou shalt find much profit in this holy war. It will be the means of keeping up constant fellowship with me. Thou shalt see thy need of coming to me for courage, for orders, for strength; and by faith thou wilt receive sensible experience of my being present with thee, and on thy side. Only trust me, and thou shalt find me faithful to my promise of help and victory. Go forth, then, to thy daily warfare, and boldly face Satan. Fear him not in the least; for that would betray a doubt of my having him under my feet, or of my putting him under thine. Give not place to him; no, not for a moment: but resist him, and continue to resist him, steadfast in faith and prayer—trusting to my promise and depending on mine arm.—Be sober; be vigilant. Thus oppose the devil, and thou wilt certainly conquer him. And having conquered, fight on. In the fight, look to me for victory; having obtained it, expect a fresh battle, and look still to me for victory: and thus go on conquering and to conquer. Thy crown is in my keeping. As sure as I have it on my head, it shall be on thine. Thou shalt soon sit down with me on my throne, a crowned conqueror for evermore.

Glory be to thee, my precious Jesus, for these faithful promises, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust! and now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant be established, and do as thou hast said. Thou hast put it into my heart to desire to be a good soldier, and to fight thy battles against all the enemies of thy crown and dignity. O thou glorious Captain of my salvation! arm me for my daily warfare with Satan. He is too cunning for me: O my God! teach me his devices. He is too mighty for me; but the seed of the woman hath bruised his head. Yes, almighty Jesus, thou hast destroyed the devil and his works. I believe in thy victory. Oh let me partake of its fruits, and daily bring thee honour and renown by my victories. Make me strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that I may not fear Satan. Send me out against him armed with thine invincible armour. Strengthen me, O my God, that I faint not through the length or sharpness of the battle, but enable me to persevere till thou discharge me from the war. Thus in a constant dependence upon thee, would I fight the good fight of faith, keeping up communion with thee in every battle, and growing more acquainted with my wants, and more thankful for every supply. O my loving Jesus! increase my fellowship with thee. I desire to war a good warfare; and every thing needful for it is from thee. From thy fulness I expect it; and when I receive it, I would use it to thy glory. Hear, Lord, and answer me for thy mercies' sake, *Amen* and *Amen*.

CHAPTER XIV.

The believer, kept by the power of God, perseveres in his holy walk and victorious warfare.

After the believer has made a great progress in his walk, and has been very successful in his warfare, yet he is not out of the reach of any temptation. He is still liable to be stopped in the way of duty. His enemies may cheat him by some stratagem, or gain some advantage over him by open force. While he is

attending to these things, as they come before him in his daily experience, a thought will often arise—

I am afraid my profession will at last come to nothing, and I shall be a cast-away. I feel so much corruption working in my duties, and my heart is so ready to revolt and to turn from the Lord in every battle, that I cannot help being uneasy about my final state. How can I? It is not in me to hold out and persevere against so much opposition from within and without? What signifies my resolution to walk forward, or to fight for an uncertain crown? I think I gain no ground. Mine own carnal will plagues me, and I love ease and quiet as much as ever. My corruptions seem as many, and mine enemies as strong, as they were. One day I fear I shall perish by their hands. My heart faints at the thought. My courage fails me. Oh! wretched man that I am! where—to whom—shall I look for strength to enable me to hold out unto the end?

No believer is absolutely free from such an attack; and there are seasons very favourable to it. If his mind be in heaviness through manifold temptations, and be reasoning legally upon them; if he be under the hidings of the Lord's countenance, or in a time of desertion; if he be fallen into any great sin, perhaps his old besetting sin; if the guilt of it be upon his conscience, and the indignation of God be heavy upon him; then such thoughts find easy admittance; and, if they be indulged, they greatly distress the believer; for they directly assault his faith, and strike at the very being of his hope. As these graces are weakened, he moves slowly; and if unbelief prevail, there is a stop put to his progress in the heavenly road.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel! who has made ample provision for victory over this temptation. The principles before insisted on are now to be brought into practice. Here is a fresh occasion to try their power and influence, and to make it appear, that in these distressing circumstances the Father has given his children good ground to rely upon his unchangeable love. He has revealed to them the immutability of his counsel and of his oath, that when they have fled to Jesus for refuge, they may comfort their hearts and say:—I bave been afraid of falling away; but it is without reason; for I have still immutable things to trust in:—although, to my sense and feeling, every thing seems to make against me, yet God has promised not to leave me nor forsake me. Oh that I may honour his promise, and, without doubting, rely upon his faithful arm to make it good.

Consider, then, O my soul, the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Review them carefully. Thou seest what influence they have upon every step of thy walk, and how mighty they are through God to carry thee through all thy difficulties. Oh study then the perfect freeness and the absolute sufficiency of the salvation of Jesus. Read and mark the bonds and securities which a faithful God has given thee to trust in, and not to be afraid. The time to honour them most is to believe them when thou hast the least sensible evidence; for that is the strongest faith. If thou canst believe upon his bare word, and it is a very good warrant, thy feet shall stand firm upon the rock, and thy goings shall be well ordered: and that thou mayst believe this in the hardest trials, God informs thee that thy continuance in grace does not depend on thyself. "Thou standest by faith;" and faith should direct thee to wbat God has undertaken and has promised to do for thee. He would have thee to place the confidence of tby heart upon his tried word, which is a never failing foundation; and if thou wast to build all thy hopes of persevering upon it, it would quiet thy fears, and comfort thy heart. Thou wouldst then see that God has not left tbee to thyself to stand or fall, but has engaged never to leave thee nor forsake thee. He has declared, he will not turn away from thee to do thee good, and he will put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not turn away from him. View thy case in this comfortable light, and while thou art considering the safety of thy persevering, as revealed in scripture for the ground of thy faith, may every promise lead thee to trust more in God, and to trust less to thyself, and then the snare which was laid for thee will be broken, and thou wilt be delivered.

But take heed of carrying thine opinions to scripture, and of forcing it to

speak for them. Beware of that common mistake: and beware of human systems. Pay no regard to men or names. Simply attend to the promises of God concerning thy persevering. Thy present trial has convinced thee that thou canst not depend on thy own faithfulness: this therefore is the time to learn practically the faithfulness of God, and to improve thy faith in it from such scripture arguments as these:—

First—the nature of the divine covenant; which is not only the unchangeable will of the Eternal Three, but is also their agreement, confirmed by oath, concerning the heirs of promise.

The Father loved them as his children, freely, with an everlasting love: he chose them, and gave them to his Son: he engaged to keep them by his power through faith unto salvation.

The Son accepted them, and wrote all their names in his book (not one of them therefore can be lost): he undertook to be made man, and to live and die for them; to rise from the dead, to ascend, and to intercede for them; and he sitteth as king mediator upon the throne till every one of them be brought to glory. The Holy Spirit covenanted to carry into execution the purposes of the Father s love, and to apply the blessings of the Son's salvation. He undertook to quicken the heirs of promise, to call them effectually, to guide, to strengthen, to sanctify, and to comfort them; yea he is not to leave them till the number of the elect be perfected: therefore HE ABIDES WITH THEM FOR EVER.

In this covenant the Eternal Three have undertaken for every heir of promise —to do all for him, and all in him—for the means, and for the end—so that not one of them can perish: for faithfulness to the covenant is one of the highest honours of the Godhead: "I am Jehovah your Alehim, which keepeth covenant: I will ever be mindful of my covenant—My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth." What strong consolation is there in these words! Study them, O my soul, that by them thy faith may be established, and they may do thee good, like a medicine.

Thou art afraid of falling away: but the blessed Trinity have undertaken to hold thee up; and their covenant engagements are to be the ground of thy believing that they will fulfil what they have promised. Observe and adore the goodness of God: see how he meets thy doubts and answers thine objections: "An oath for confirmation is, among men, an end of all strife: wherein God, willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge" to Jesus. Thy faith should run parallel with this promise, and should safely trust as far as it warrants thee: now it gives thee sufficient reason to conclude that thy state before God is immutable, and that he has determined thou shalt not fall away and perish: for observe,

Secondly, his design in the covenant. He knew thy frame, thine infirmities, and thy temptations, and therefore he provided the covenant, and promised the blessings of it upon oath, *for thy sake*—to end ALL strife in thy conscience—and to give thee strong consolation. This was his mind and will. He revealed it for thee, to settle thy heart in believing, and to administer to thee great comfort. Weigh attentively each of these particulars, and then say what more could have been done to satisfy thee of thine immutable persevering.

But thou thinkest, "Such trials as thine are uncommon, and perhaps not provided for in the covenant, and therefore it can be no disparagement to the divine faithfulness if thou shouldest fall away." How can this be since the everlasting covenant is ORDERED IN ALL THINGS, and on the part of God is absolutely SURE?—nothing that concerns thee is left out of it—not a single hair of thy head—thy trials are all appointed and ordered, and the end also which they are to answer.

Perhaps, from the clear evidence of the divine record, thou art convinced of the covenant of God to save the heirs of promise, and of his engaging to keep them that they shall never perish; but thou art afraid thou art not in the covenant, nor an heir of promise. From whence arise thy fears? From scripture? No. All scripture is on thy side. Hast thou not fled, as a poor sinner, to Jesus

for refuge? Hast thou not acknowledged his divine nature, and his all-sufficient work? And though thou art now tempted to doubt, yet some faith is still fighting against unbelief? These are covenant blessings. Oh look up then to Jesus! —why not thy Jesus? But, however, look to him—keep looking on—and he will give thee reason to be ashamed of thy doubts and fears.

But the Lord hides himself from me, and therefore I fear I am not in his favour. This objection is answered in the charter of grace—I WILL NOT TURN AWAY FROM DOING THEE GOOD. He has hid his face, and thou art troubled: this trouble is for good. It should put thee upon inquiring into the reason of God's hiding himself. It should humble thee, and should exercise thy faith upon such a scripture as this—"For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart: I have seen his ways and will heal him: I will lead him also, and will restore comforts to him and to his mourners." Although he hid himself, yet he had love to his people—although he smote them, yet it was a fatherly correction. But,

Thou fearest, God not only hides his face, but has also quite forsaken thee. He may, as to thy sense and feeling, but not as to his own purpose, which changeth not. Hear how he speaks to thee, and silences thy doubts—"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." How gracious is thy God! What infinite mercy is it, that he should give thee such promises, so suited to the trials of thy faith, to preserve thee under them, and to bring thee out of them! Read carefully, over and over again, these promises; and may every reading of them disperse the cloud of unbelief until thy soul be enlivened with the light of the Lord's loving countenance.

But perhaps thou art in a worse case, as to thine own apprehension: "thou thinkest God is incensed against me, and justly—he has cast me off, and I can expect no more favour at his hand: once, indeed, I thought he loved me; but I have fallen into a great sin—an old, besetting sin: my conscience accuses me of committing it against light and conviction: it is a foul black spot, such as is not to be found upon the children of God."

Thou art fallen: and wilt thou lie there, and not be raised up again? Thou art under guilt: and wilt thou nurse it, and add sin to sin? Aggravate the sinfulness of thy fall as much as thou wilt, yet thou canst not be truly humbled for it, but by returning to God, and by trusting in the plenteous redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Then thy heart will be softened and melted into love; for grace will have its due honour, and thou wilt see what the scripture says of thy case in its divine truth and majesty. Thou wilt feel thyself exactly what the word of God says of thee—a fallen sinful creature—in thee (that is in thy flesh) dwelleth no good thing—so that there is not any sin, but thou art capable of falling into it through the strength of temptation. So long as thou art in the body, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; in this conflict thou mayst fall; but the covenant secures thee from perishing. Abraham, the father of the faithful, fell: the friend of God fell into the same sin again and again. Moses fell: so did David. Peter, forewarned, fell: so did all the apostles. Yet they were believers, and they did recover themselves out of the snare of the devil: for whatever sin thou art fallen into may be pardoned, as theirs was. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin"—there is in it an infinite virtue to wash away every spot and stain: it is a public fountain—it stands open for daily use, that believers may wash and be clean—it is always, at every given moment, effectual—it CLEANSETH, in the present tense, now—to-day, while it is called to-day: for there is nothing new to be suffered on the part of Christ, in order to take away sin. He put it away by the sacrifice of himself: the Father accepted it; and thus proclaims the free forgiveness of all the trespasses for which the atonement was made—"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Why dost thou reject the comfort of this promise? It is suited to thy present distress, and it is the remedy for it. Thou art fallen into unrighteousness—God

says I will be merciful to it. Thou art fallen into sins and iniquities: he says, I will remember them no more. Thou mayst remember thy fall; but let it be in order to rise from it by faith. It should teach thee thy need of the blood of the Lamb. It should bring thee to sprinkle it afresh upon thy conscience, and to live safe and happy under the protection of it. Thus apply it to thy fall, and thou wilt repent aright; thou wilt be truly humbled and made more watchful. Thou wilt live more by faith in thy covenant God, wilt glorify more the infinitely perfect salvation of Jesus, and wilt be more dependent upon the grace and keeping of the eternal Spirit.

Consider then, O my soul, the rich abounding, superabounding grace of thy God in making such a provision for raising thee up, when fallen into sin. He intended the promises in the covenant should be the means of thy recovery, as they give thee good ground still to trust in a covenant God, and in his immutable counsel and oath. Oh lie not then in guilt. Rest not in unbelief. Give not place to the devil. The Lord has put words into thy mouth: may he help thee in the faith of thy heart to take them up and say—"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me: I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." If the Lord open to thee the rich treasury of his grace in this scripture, and enable thee to depend on the ample security here given for raising thee from thy fall, then consider, in the

Third place, the express promises made in the covenant—that the believer shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. These promises are not conditional, made to the believer upon certain terms, as if upon doing his part God would do his also; for he does not stand by his own will, or strength, or faithfulness—he does not hold out to the end by his own diligence and watchfulness in means—or receive the crown of glory as the merited reward of any works of righteousness done by him. The promises are all of free grace, not dependent on man's will, but on God's: not yea and nay, but of absolutely certain fulfilment. They were all made in the covenant to Christ the head, and are already made good to Christ, as the head, for the use of his members—"For ALL the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him, Amen." He was given for the covenant of his people, and, as such, he undertook to do all their works for them, and in them; and therefore all the promised blessings of the covenant are laid up in his fulness—"in him they are yea"—and laid up, as the head has the fulness of the senses, for the use of his members—"in him they are, Amen." He communicates the promised blessings freely, not conditionally; by believing, and not for working; "Therefore," says the apostle, speaking of Christ's righteousness, "it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."

In this sovereign manner and style runs the covenant, and every promise in it—I WILL BE THEIR GOD, of mine own mere motion and grace, and according to the good pleasure of mine own will—AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE—my will shall make them willing in the day of my power; for I will work in them both to will and to do: yea, *I will be* a Father unto them, and *they shall be* my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. The word FATHER relates to his children, and expresses the unchangeable love of his heart towards them: it is a dear covenant name, and denotes the inseparable connexion between him and his children. Whenever they hear it, it should always excite in them an idea of his everlasting affection. He loves his family as a Father, and loves every one of them with the same almighty love. He cannot change. He cannot cease to be a Father, and they cannot cease to be his children. His name is a security to them, that they cannot perish; for if one of them could, they all might. And then his covenant purpose, to bring many sons unto glory, would be defeated—his relation to them as their Father would be broken—he would be a Father without children—he would deny them the promised blessings—he would forget to be gracious to them—his will concerning them would change, or would be overruled by some opposite will—and his great plan in the covenant would come

to nothing. But these things cannot possibly be. He is the Father of his children, and he has engaged by promise and oath, to love, to bless, and to keep them for ever. Out of perfect love he gave them to his Son, who undertook to be their Saviour: he came, and was made man, Jehovah incarnate, to live and die for them. He was so delighted with them (for he has all their names written in his book) and with the work, that he was straitened till it was accomplished. Blessings on him for ever! it is finished: the royal Saviour is upon the throne, almighty to save his dear redeemed. He would lose his name, which is above every name—the honours of his salvation would fade away upon his head, and the glories of his offices would come to nothing—if one whom Jesus lived and died to save should perish. But it is not possible. Whom he loves, he loves unto the end. "I give unto them," says he, "eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." They are his seed—and it was covenanted that he should see his seed. They are the travail of his soul—and he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. How can he be satisfied if any one of them should be lost? He prayed—"Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." And the Father always heard him. He prayed that they might be with him where he is, to see his glory: and the Holy Spirit covenanted to bring them to it—he undertook, as his name *Spirit* imports, to breathe life unto them, to call, to convert them, to keep them, and to give them every thing needful for their spiritual life. How can they fail of coming to glory, being thus kept for it by the power of God? The Holy Spirit would lose his name *Spirit* or breath of life, and his office, which is to abide with and to dwell for ever in the elect people of God, if any one of them should die from God, and perish. Thus there is full security given by the names and offices of the Trinity, that believers shall be kept from falling away. The Father cannot be without his children. The glory of Jesus would fade away if one of his redeemed was plucked out of his hand. The divine honours of the Spirit of life would be eclipsed if he was to forsake his charge and to suffer any of the redeemed to fall into hell. But these things cannot be. The will of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the same concerning the salvation of the elect, which is as secure as covenant-bonds and oaths can make it.

Art thou then, O my soul, established in this great truth? Dost thou yield to the power of the evidence which the blessed Trinity have vouchsafed to give thee? Meditate carefully upon it for the growth of thy faith. Search the Scriptures, and observe how clearly God declares his fixed purpose to keep his people, and to hold them up unto the end. The great preacher of the gospel, in the Old Testament church, speaks thus of the unchangeable will of a covenant God—"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." A great preacher in the New Testament church, has confirmed the same precious truth. He is treating of the golden chain of salvation, and showing how inseparable every link of it is; and in this prospect he triumphs—"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us: who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loveth us." By the mouth of these two infallible witnesses the truth is established. They depose that the covenant is immutable, and that nothing can separate believers from the love wherewith God loves them in his Son. Oh, most comfortable doctrine! How encouraging is it, in any undertaking, to set about it with certain hope of success! How animating in our Christian walk, how reviving in the dark and difficult paths of it, to have God's promise that he will keep us and bring us to a happy end! How pleasing is it to go on by faith in our warfare, casting all our care upon him, who careth for us! How delightful is it to trust his promise, and daily to find it made good!—"Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation." Here, O my soul, thou art to seek for strong con-

solation amidst the trials and difficulties of thy walk. Thou art afraid of falling; God has engaged to hold thee up. Thou hast been tempted to think thou shouldst fall quite away and come to nothing. But God says, thou art PRESERVED in Christ Jesus: his covenant and oath are made to confirm the faith of thy persevering. Thou standest by faith; and thy faith should lead thee to rest safely on what God says about thy standing: and for thy faith itself, its continuing, its increasing, thou hast his infallible faithfulness to depend upon. Thou art weak, but he keeps thee by his power. Thine enemies are strong, but none of them shall pluck thee out of his hand. Thou art willing to join them and to depart from the living God; but he has promised to put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not depart from him. He meets with thy doubts, and answers all thine objections in a word; for he hath said, I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE NOR FORSAKE THEE.

Be of good courage then, O my soul, and go forward, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and he will bring thee safe to the end of thy journey. He has promised it. Put thyself into his hands, and give him the glory of keeping thee. He will hold up thy goings in his paths, that thy footsteps slip not. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. How, then, canst thou miscarry, safe under his guidance and keeping? Commit thy ways unto the Lord. Do it simply. Look up by faith to his promise, and then lean on his arm. Thus going on, thou mayst rejoice at every step in the Lord thy God. He has left thee a sweet hymn upon the subject; with which the weary travellers to Sion have often refreshed their spirits. Take it up, and sing it after them. Study it. Mix faith with it: and with perfect reliance on what God, who cannot lie, has promised in it to do for thee, sing and make melody with it in thy heart unto the Lord:—

"In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine: I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every moment: Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day: Fury is not in me: Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them; I would burn them together. Or will he take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, then he shall make peace with me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and shall fill the face of the world with fruit."

O my good God and faithful keeper! I do believe these precious promises: help mine unbelief; forgive my distrusting thy faithfulness; and enable me steadfastly to rely upon it for the future. What return can I make unto thee for grafting me into the true vine! O Lord! this love surpasseth knowledge. I was fit for nothing but the fire; and thou hast brought me into the vineyard of red wine, and hast enabled me to trust in that blood of the Lamb, which cheereth God and man. On this my soul lives and is refreshed. And being through grace *in* him, and living *upon* him, I bless thee, holy Father, for thy faithful promise to keep me unto the end. I am still an easy prey to all those who seek the hurt of my soul; but thou hast given me thy word that, lest any hurt me, thou wilt keep me night and day. I confess, gracious God, that I have dishonoured thee by doubting of thy love, and by questioning its unchangeableness; but now I believe that fury is not in thee to any one branch of the true vine. There is love, and nothing but love, in all thy dealings with Christ, and with his. Forgive my guilty fears and suspicions of thy forsaking me, arising from my weakness, and from the strength of mine enemies: I now see that thou canst as easily consume them as fire can briers and thorns. Lord, increase my faith in thy promised strength, that I may lay hold of it for peace, and may keep fast hold of it for maintaining peace with thee always and by all means. Oh grant me this, my good God, that my faith may work more by love. Let me take deeper root in Jesus, and grow up more into him, blossoming and budding, and flourishing in his vineyard. I depend upon thee to keep me a branch in him, and to make me a fruitful branch, bringing forth plentifully the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus, to the glory and praise of God. I believe the work is thine—thou hast begun it—and thou wilt carry it on unto the day of the Lord Jesus. Thou art faithful to thy word and work. In dependence upon thy faithfulness I

hope to persevere. Let it be done unto me according to thy promises, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Hear, Lord, and answer for thy mercies' sake in Jesus, to whom with thee and the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, be equal glory and praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XV.

The believer finishes his course, and enters into rest.

The believer is now happily arrived at the verge of life. Goodness and mercy have followed him all his days, and will not lose their glory by forsaking him at the close of them. It is appointed unto all men once to die; and his fixed time is at hand. The body is returning to dust; and the spirit must appear before the throne of God. In this trying hour he trusts to the principles which had carried him through life; and he finds them a perfect preservative from the fear and from the power of death. The same faith in a reconciled God and loving Father keeps peace in his conscience, and love in his heart. He depends upon the atonement of Immanuel, and is safe; he wraps himself up in the robe of Immanuel's righteousness, and is happy. He knows he shall be found in Jesus when he stands before God, and therefore looks upon death as his friend, and meets it with a hope full of glory and immortality.

This is the privilege of believers in Jesus. They die in peace. Their principles are mighty, through God, to support and comfort them in the hour of death. Reader! are these principles thine? Examine carefully. Come to a point in this matter; for it is of infinite and eternal moment. What is thy state? Art thou prepared to die? Perhaps thou art openly profane. And what wilt thou do upon thy death-bed, when the divine law accuses thee, justice condemns thee, and the terrors of hell take hold of thee? The stings of guilt at such a time will be worse in the conscience than all the tortures that thy sick body can possibly feel. But if thy conscience be asleep—Oh, what a dreadful death, if thou go out of the world with thine eyes shut, and open them not till thou find the flames of hell about thee!

Perhaps thou art not afraid, because thou hast a decent outside: Oh! take care of trusting in thyself, lest thou shouldst have thy portion with the openly profane. If thou make what thou art, or hast any ground of thy hope before God; if thou depend on thy duties or righteousness, or join them with the work of Christ, and meet death in this confidence; how dreadful will be thy mistake! how inevitable thy ruin! Such false hopes are thus described—"Behold, all ye that kindle a fire and compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled."—But mind the end—thus saith the Lord—"This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." And together with them will the open enemy of God and his Christ lie down. A denier of revelation is brought to the bed of languishing—a slow lingering distemper is carrying him off—the physician has given him over—his disease is mortal, and he is convinced of it. But, alas! he has no preparation for death and judgment. He has some Christian friends, and they talk freely to him about his eternal state; but he will hear nothing of his guilt or of his want of a Saviour. They get a minister of Christ to visit him; and he speaks to him of sin, which is the transgression of the holy law, and of the justice of God which is engaged to give transgressors their due, and of the impossibility of his finding mercy at the judgment-seat until every demand be satisfied which law and justice have upon him: he tries to persuade the dying man of the Godhead of Jesus, and of the divine work of Jesus, but in vain: he sets at nought the minister's advice, and with a hardened and impenitent heart replies—Be it as it will with me in eternity, I will have nothing to do with your Christ. So he died. We need not follow him to the judgment-seat to know what became of his soul. The infallible record has declared what will be the portion of the unbelieving. Their misery

is as certain as the truth of God. O reader, examine thyself: for he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Perhaps thou art in name a Christian: but what thinkest thou of Christ? The grand heresy of this day is about his person; and if thou art fallen into it, there is no hope in thy death. Is he Jehovah? Oh, leave not this matter undetermined. The truth of his word, and the glory of his work, depend entirely upon this one point: so does thy peace and comfort: for if thou believe him to be any thing but the self-existent God, thou shalt die in thy sins. His sufferings cannot avail for thy pardon, nor his obedience for thy righteousness, unless he be Jehovah. Without faith in him, as the self-existent Saviour, death will find thee under guilt, and judgment will leave thee among the enemies of God and his Christ.

Whatever evil there is in death to terrify, whatever pain to hurt, the blessed Jesus by the grace of God tasted it for all his. The grace of the Father gave him to be the surety for his people unto death. He died for them, and as truly tasted death, as ever the nicest palate tasted meat or drink. But it was like a taste—of short duration—it was not possible that he should be holden long under the bands of death. He rose again on the third day: and because he lives, believers in him shall live also. They are partakers of his victory over death, and share in all its blessings. The sentence of the broken law is repealed. They do not die to bear the punishment of sin. Christ sustained that. The pains and agonies of death fell upon him—"The sorrows of death (says he) compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me." He was a just man, who had no reason to fear death, but, being found in the place of his people with their sins upon him, he was to bear every thing that was dreadful in death. Hence his agonies at the approach of it—"My heart," says he, "is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me; and horror hath overwhelmed me." He endured those inconceivable horrors to deliver them, who, through fear of death, had been all their lifetime subject to bondage. But the bondage is at an end when they believe in his victory. Their fears are dispelled when they see the glory of the battle which he fought and won—how, by dying, he took away sin, satisfied justice, removed the curse, conquered death, broke its sceptre, took out its sting, and left nothing in it but what is friendly to them. In these believing views they can meet death with confidence; for they cannot taste that in death which Christ tasted. He felt it, that they might not feel it: he died in agonies that they might die in peace. O my most loving and precious Jesus, I believe this; let not any unbelief in me dishonour thy complete conquest over all that is fearful or painful in dying. My times are in thy hand: when thou art pleased to bring them to an end, let me find death swallowed up in victory. Oh that I may then triumph with thy redeemed! What can separate us from the love of Christ?—shall the sting of death, or the fear of death, or of Satan, or of hell? No; thanks be to God!—these were all conquered when Jesus died; subdued for ever when he rose again. And he has left us many precious promises that we, trusting in him, shall share in his victory, and find the blessings of it in the hour of death.

Attend then, O my soul, to what he has engaged to bestow upon his dying disciples, as the fruit of his death; and give him credit, not doubting but he will make it good. Live now in the comfort of his promises, and fear not. The almighty Jesus will be with thee, and thou shalt conquer with him in the hour of death. Observe his word, which cannot be broken—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." The ransom which he here engages to pay for his, he paid as their surety, and he daily applies it to them as their Saviour. Upon quoting this promise, and finding by faith the happy fulfilment of it, mark how the apostle rejoices with the Corinthians in the near view of death—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." O thou most glorious conqueror! almighty Jesus! eternal

thanks be to thee, that the law cannot accuse, sin cannot condemn, death cannot sting thy redeemed. Thou hast promised to make them happy in death, and faithful is thy word. The beloved John is one of thy witnesses—"I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord:" Write it for the use of my disciples, that it may be the ground of their faith when they come to die: I promise to make them blessed in their death: being IN me—members under me—their head, and living in the Lord—they shall die in the Lord: they shall have union with me, and communion too, when they are dying: the hour of death, the time of their dissolution, shall be a season of great blessedness: they shall have my presence in the last moments: I will walk with them through the valley of the shadow of death, and they shall fear no evil: my rod and my staff shall then comfort them. O my God, make thy word good. Sweet Jesus, write this promise upon my heart. Oh help me to mix faith with it, that when mine appointed time is come, I may experience the blessedness of dying in the Lord. I wait for the time: it is not far off. Oh keep me, Jesus, till that hour. Keep me, Jesus, in that hour. Save me through life and death, and bless me with thine eternal salvation. Hear, and answer for thy mercies' sake. *Amen.*

Meditate, O my soul, upon these blessings. Consider, how great, how many they are. Consider also thine unworthiness: thou art less than the least of them. And yet God has set his love upon thee, and has given thee the greatest of them. He has called thee to the knowledge of his love in Jesus, and has shed it abroad in thy heart. He has set thee in the way that leads to the eternal enjoyment of his love, has promised to keep thee all the way, and to bless thee at the end of it. He will make thee blessed in death, and blessed for evermore. Hitherto thou hast found him faithful. Not one good thing has failed which thou didst ask in faith, and wait for at his hands. Review all his dealings with thee, and see what infinite mercy there was in them. He made thy walk prosperous, thy warfare successful, thy crosses sanctified. Thou hast not taken a false step but when thou wast not living by the faith of the Son of God. Oh trust him then, and be not afraid. His love has brought thee thus far: he has led thee in the right way to the verge of life; and he declares he will not leave thee nor forsake thee in the hour of death. Fear not to look down; fear not to go down with Jesus into the grave. He has promised—"I will be with thee;" and wherever he is, there is heaven. He is with his dying friends, and they are blessed indeed. They die in faith—they live by faith in death—and as soon as faith ceases, they live with their God for ever. The body falls asleep, and rests safely till the morning of the resurrection. The soul in a moment enters into the joy of its Lord—a joy like his—pure and holy—a fulness of joy—and is satisfied for ever. Oh what will the heart feel in this blessedness! What acknowledgments will it make to God and the Lamb! To praise him for the wonders of his grace in bringing to that glory will be the happy employment of eternity. To see him as he is, in his divine majesty, is heaven. For how great communications of his love, the being ever with him, and ever like him, will make the soul capable of, we cannot perfectly conceive. These things are at present too high and heavenly even for our thoughts. By faith we sometimes have a little glimpse of the glory to be revealed; and it eclipses all the grandeur of the world. There are happy moments when we are permitted to behold the king in his beauty, when he discovers his matchless loveliness, and gives us a taste of the heavenly feast: at such blessed seasons the soul is bowed down and humbled to the dust, adoring the infinite mercy and goodness of God. If there be so much of heaven in these manifestations of divine love, what must the full enjoyment be? We may suppose a happy soul, entered into rest, thus meditating upon the grace which brought it to that glory:—

Blessing and thanks without ceasing be unto Father, Son, and Spirit, through whose sovereign grace I was chosen to this blessedness, and am now brought to the perfect and everlasting enjoyment of it. This communication with the Godhead, through Jesus, is as far beyond my former thoughts of it as the heaven is above the earth. How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty, that the most high and holy One would thus communicate his love unto sinful creatures! Glory be to thee, holy Father, for predestinating me to the adoption of children, and for the free gift of the heavenly inheritance. Glory be to thee, incarnate

Jehovah, for the covenant undertakings for me, for thy life, death, and complete salvation. I worship thee, I glorify thee, O God the Holy Ghost, for quickening me, for teaching me and enabling me, through believing in Jesus, to experience the love of the Father, and for bringing me to enjoy his endless blessings. Surely the goodness and mercy of the holy Trinity have followed me all the days of my life, were with me when I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, and are now my most blessed portion in the house of the Lord. I am made a pillar in the temple of my God, and am to go no more out. Oh what exceeding riches of grace are these! What has God done for me! Angels and brethren, help me to praise. My debt is immense. No saved sinner can owe him more. It is growing every moment. My praises pay none of it. With my thankful heart, and it is all thankfulness, I only acknowledge his infinite goodness, and own myself his eternal debtor. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.

Reader! art thou in the way which leads to this glory? If not, may the Lord be merciful unto thee, and bring thee unto it.

If thou art seeking to be set right in it, remember Jesus is THE WAY. May his good Spirit enable thee to believe in his word, and to trust in it, till thou attain the salvation of thy soul.

If thou art in the way, and hast communion with the Father through faith in the atonement and righteousness of his Son, art thou maintaining it in thy daily walk, and improving it in every duty? And art thou going on thy way rejoicing in God? If thou art sorrowing for outward crosses, or burdened with inward conflicts, canst thou nevertheless find joy and peace in believing? Dost thou march on, victorious in thy warfare, keeping up communion with God against all opposition of thy spiritual enemies? And is thy faith established upon the faithfulness of God, that he will carry on his own work in thee unto the day of the Lord Jesus? In this faith dost thou hope to die? Has God indeed done these wonders for thee? Oh bless him then with me, and let us magnify his name together. Be thou exalted, Lord, in us, and by us. Every day we would grow up into nearer and holier communion with thee. We desire to be more like thee, and to show forth more of thy lovely image before men. Oh help us to praise thee better with our lips and lives. By the communion of the Holy Ghost we would communicate more by faith with the Son in his salvation, and with the Father in his love. O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity! in this divine fellowship we hope to find our heaven upon earth: let it be growing and increasing, helped forward by all means, and, if it please thee, by these volumes. Make them, Lord, the instrument under thee of leading thy people into the right way, and of establishing them in it. Accompany the reading of them with the teaching of thy Spirit, and to the advancement of thy glory. I present the books unto thee, ever glorious Jesus, and lay them at thy feet. Thou knowest my heart: accept them graciously, as a public acknowledgment for inestimable mercies. In thy great compassion overlook the faults in them: what is agreeable to the scripture is thine own. Make use of it to thy praise. I devote myself, my body and soul, my tongue and pen, all I have and am, to thy service. I would not look upon myself as any longer mine own, but being bought with a price, I would glorify thee in the use of all thy gifts and graces. With thee I desire to walk through life. In thine arms I hope to die. Through thee I expect soon to enjoy perfect communion with the Father, and the Spirit. Therefore into thy hands I commend myself. Keep me in the right way. Guide me to the end of it, that I may finish my course with joy, and join thy redeemed in giving to thee, with the Father and the Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, equal and everlasting praise. Hear, Lord, and answer. *Amen.*

THE

TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

PREFACE

The present treatise is a continuation of some remarks formerly published concerning the experience of a true Christian, who, quickened by the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, lives by faith, and who is enabled to go forward in his walk by the faith of the Son of God. There was one volume upon this subject, entitled, "The Life of Faith," and some years after, two volumes on "The Walk of Faith:" in which the divine helps and supports were considered great and many, not only for the establishment of believers in the way, but also for their happiness in every step of it, that they might rejoice in the Lord always, yea, with such a fulness of joy as to make them triumph in the God of their salvation.

This is the grand Gospel privilege, which is granted to believers, as believers, and promised to them in the freest and fullest manner that any grant can be conveyed; springing from sovereign grace in the giver, and received, not from any qualification in themselves, but entirely from his own bounty, continued and increased with all the rich and ripe fruits of faith, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God.

It has been long observed, and much lamented, that there are very few of these happy believers who give such a perfect credit to the promises of God in Christ, as to rest their hearts upon his faithfulness, without any doubt or wavering: they do not trust so far as the promises warrant them; which stops the exercise of faith and hinders the growth of the spiritual life. Weak faith has little fruit. Strong faith improves love to God, loving obedience, patient suffering, persevering warfare, and the other fruits of the Spirit: indeed, for this very purpose it is commanded that we might trust and not be afraid: and there are promises made to them who obey the command; and all things promised are possible to them who believe: for there is strength sufficient in the promiser to make faith grow, yea to make it grow exceedingly: and he has done it, giving us a happy instance in the church of the Thessalonians, in which persecution raged, but faith was victorious, and patience triumphant. It has pleased God to give us in the scriptures many encouragements for the growth of faith, which are in the following treatise set before the reader, that we may honour his word, and trust in it at all times, especially when appearances make against their being fulfilled. Then it is high worship, against hope to believe in hope, as the father of the faithful did: and they are his children, and follow the steps of his faith, who, when sin is felt in its defilement, in its guilt, in the sense of inward corruptions, and of strong temptations, in the many troubles of life, in the infirmities of age, and in the approach of death, put their whole trust and confidence in the promises of God. Nothing else is appointed, either to bring in the peace of God to the conscience, or to keep it in. God only in such trials can be a safe refuge, and a sure defence; and faith, looking at what he has engaged to give, secures the promised help to the glory of God. Under these several heads something is here offered from the scriptures of truth to encourage a more steadfast reliance on the divine faithfulness than one commonly meets with. And what is said upon each head is here set before the reader, on the authority of God's word, and is also followed with fervent prayer, that the end

of publishing this treatise may be answered, even, that the scriptural faith may be hereby increased, that it may abound yet more and more, and in such a great degree as may bring the highest glory to God, the truest holiness to the heart, and the happiest experience in the life, and in the warfare of the Christian. May the gracious Lord, who is the author and finisher of the faith, accompany it with his Spirit to the advancement of his own praise, and to the edification of his own people! To him who keepeth promise for ever, be glory in the church, through Christ Jesus, world without end. *Amen.*

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

WHERE there has been war, a triumph supposes a battle to have been fought, a victory to have been obtained, and the great rejoicings of the conquerors upon this occasion. The Christian has his matter of triumph; but it is spiritual. It is always in Christ, the Captain of his salvation. So it is written—"Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." The apostle is speaking of his preaching the Gospel. He carried the sweet savour of Jesus' name from place to place: but it was not always received as a joyful sound, nor welcomed, as it deserved. He met with great opposition. The Holy Ghost witnessed, that in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him. As these abounded, grace did much more abound. For he was carried on through persecutions, imprisonment, stoning, whipping, perils of various kinds, suffered for Christ, and Christ made him victorious over them all. He not only enabled Paul to conquer, but also made him more than conqueror—he was the blessed instrument of pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and of setting up in the world, that kingdom of Jesus, which is flourishing to this day, and which will triumph to eternity. A poor weak man had all the Roman empire against him; but he did wonders. Through Christ strengthening him, he went on conquering and to conquer: and to Christ he gives all the glory; acknowledging that the Gospel, his preaching it, and the success of it, was of God; the excellency of the power was of God. "Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." He, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate, that as our surety he might live and die and conquer for us. It was to the everlasting honour of his grace and mercy that he would engage in this war, and undertake to deliver his people from the tyranny of their enemies. They were in bondage to sin—sold under sin—enslaved to divers lusts and pleasures—living according to the course of this world—according to the prince of the power of the air, the wicked spirit, who now worketh effectually in the children of disobedience. These tyrants were leading them captive at their will, hoping soon to have them delivered over to death, and then to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. In this miserable state, under sin—under condemnation we all were—guilty and helpless—not only without any means of deliverance in our own power, but without any desire of it, being tempted to dream of liberty while we were tied and bound with the chain of our sins, and fancying that we were free, even while our enemies were waiting to exercise their utmost malice against us, by binding us with chains of everlasting darkness. Oh what mercies—what compassions are in our God—in our Jesus. He remembered us in this our low estate, and manifested the exceeding riches of his grace, in coming from heaven to save his people from their sins. To this end Jehovah was manifested in the flesh, as it is written, Jer. l. 33, 34: "The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together, and all that took them captives held them fast, and refused to let them go; but their Redeemer is strong;

the Lord of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause." He made all our enemies his own, and fought our battles against them. He obeyed, that the broken law, which stood against us, might be magnified by his obedience. The penalties of it he endured when the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all. His cross was his triumphal chariot, on which he vanquished all our foes, Col. ii. 14, 15. He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross. By dying on it, he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and by his rising from the dead on the third day, according to the scriptures, he overcame death and him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And now as God-man in one Christ, the almighty Saviour of his redeemed, he is seated upon his throne of grace: all his enemies being made his footstool, he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Such was the battle which the Redeemer fought. Such was the victory which he obtained. The important news of it is the substance of that blessed gospel, which he ordered his apostles to preach to every creature, and which he promised to assist them in, and to be with them for that purpose to the end of the world. He is as good as his word to this day. Still faith cometh by hearing it. The Holy Spirit witnesses to it, that it is the truth of God—and he applies it, and makes it the power of God unto salvation. He enables the hearers to mix such faith with it, that they receive, and enjoy the happy fruits of Christ's victory. Once they were dead in trespasses and sins, but now Christ hath quickened them. They were guilty, and bound over to condemnation, but the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed them from the law of sin and of death. Once they walked after the course of this world; but now they walk with God. Their old enemies are still fighting against them, and watching for their destruction; but they are enabled to gain daily victory over them, over the world, the flesh, and the devil, through the strength of Jesus, and through the power of his might. Their wants are many, and they are daily made more sensible of them; but they have an abundant supply of every thing that pertains to life and godliness, out of the infinite fulness of God their Saviour.

Thus far the three volumes went, which were formerly published upon this subject, entitled "The Life of Faith," and "The Walk of Faith." The present treatise relates to the improvement of the former doctrines, considering the scripture motives and encouragements for the believer's rejoicing always in the Lord, and triumphing in the God of his salvation. The ground of his triumph is the work of Christ: his warrant to depend upon it, is the word of Christ: and his actual dependence is the work of the Spirit of Christ. Building upon these principles, he is commanded to go on from faith to faith, still pressing forward, that he may see more clearly the glory of the person, and the glory of the work of Christ—what he is to trust in for his title to salvation, and for the things which accompany salvation, and may, by every day's experience, be growing into a more settled dependence upon the word of Christ, and upon his faithfulness to fulfil it, and thereby may be learning to expect constant supplies, and according as his faith increases, receiving greater supplies of the power of the Spirit of Christ—that the God of hope may fill him with all joy and peace in believing; that he may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost: and we have an encouraging example in the Thessalonians, who had great trials, and met them with great faith. The apostle commended it highly; but by practice it had so improved, that, having occasion to mention it some time afterwards, he says—"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly." We have the same promises and the same helps as they had—promises exceeding great, and exceeding precious, containing a free grant in Christ of all spiritual blessings—a full warrant to make use of them for life and godliness, with commands and encouragements to trust and not be afraid of any enemies, or of any dangers: because he is faithful who has promised to be with them—to guide them with his counsel—to keep them safe by his power—to bless them with his love—and never to leave them nor forsake them: so that, in all difficulties and troubles, they may go on their

way rejoicing, until faith and patience have done their perfect work. To this purpose, a divine, whose praise is in all the churches, has given his testimony; "It is an everlasting spring of comfort, and encouragement unto the people of God, both in prayer, and unto prayer; they pray to him, who is mighty, mighty to do what they pray for. The Lord's promises are our richest inheritances, and that not only because he hath promised greater and better things than are in the compass of any man's power to make good, or in the compass of any man's understanding to comprehend, but because he will certainly be as good in performance as he hath been in promise: for he is in one mind concerning all that he hath promised: he will be merciful as he hath promised, and pardon sin as he hath promised, and sanctify all our troubles as he hath promised: he will give us his Spirit as he hath promised, and save us eternally as he hath promised." A great layman thus confirms the same truth—"Were God but believed in what he says, all the temptations of Satan and the doubtings of our unbelieving hearts would be silenced and brought to nothing. What exceeding folly is it in our hearts, that God who never deceived any that trusted in him, should be distrusted by any, and not believed by all. He is the God of truth: so is his word the word of truth. And not any soul, that ever tried God by trusting him upon his word, but found him so. Oh, then, take God's word, and our hearts will be quiet. Though the heathen do rage, yet they imagine but a vain thing. In this glorious doctrine, free grace in God is the fountain, full satisfaction to divine justice the way, but perfect salvation and redemption to all his elect body in Christ the end. And truly when a soul can say, My beloved is mine, and I am his, he hath spoken all at once. I know no other light, nor rule, but the word and Spirit to make out any thing of God to any soul. The glory of the great day will be—God is mine, and I am his."

CHAPTER II.

Some scripture encouragements for the triumph of faith.

All the Old Testament words which we translate triumph, signify great joy felt in the heart, and expressed outwardly in word or deed; a jubilee of joy, even joy in the highest, as near as it can be to the joy of heaven. In the New Testament the word is used but twice; First, for what Christ engaged to do for us; and secondly, for what Christ engaged to do in us: for as he undertook to fight our battles against all our enemies—sin, the world, Satan, death, and hell: and the Captain of our salvation has gained a complete victory, and had a most glorious triumph over them in his own person—when he blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross. And he still goes on conquering and to conquer; by the preaching of his cross and passion, his resurrection and ascension, he is to this very day exalting the honours of his victory and triumph in the hearts and lives of his redeemed, giving them such a share in his conquests, that they ought to be ever praising him with joyful lips. Now, thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ. This was the apostle's happy experience. He found that the Gospel, and his preaching it, and the great success which attended it, were the fruits of Christ's presence with him, and blessing upon him: therefore to him he gave all the glory. So do we still. We see the triumphs of the cross spread far and wide, and we praise him for our day of Gospel grace. The crucified Saviour in his majesty rides on prosperously in the chariots of salvation, and his enemies fall under him. In the day of his power he makes them a willing people. They submit to his sceptre, and acknowledge him to be their Lord and their God. Under his banner they fight the good fight of faith, and they daily conquer, yea, they are more than conquerors

through him who loveth them—crowned conquerors in glory everlasting. Thus it appears that the triumph of the Head includes the triumph of its members. The fountain from whence springs their present and their eternal joy is God—God in Christ. They glory in the victories of the God-man; because of his commandment; because of his free promise, which is a perfect warrant for the fullest confidence, and because of his goodness, truth, and power, which are bound to fulfil all his engagements. Looking to these infallible securities, the believer's heart is established, trusting in the Lord. Being of the true circumcision, he would put no confidence in the flesh, but would be daily crucifying it with its affections and lusts, and bringing all high thoughts of self to the obedience of Christ. If he has been long standing in the faith—an old Christian—if he has received much consolation from his Lord, or has been very active and successful in his service, his trust is never in himself. The ground of his believing is always one and the same. He has no new doctrine to learn. No new warrant to encourage him to believe. The word of God: "Thus saith the Lord" is always sufficient, and ought to draw forth the fullest credit, that can possibly be given to the testimony of the God of truth. What was advanced before in "The Life of Faith" and in "The Walk of Faith," is taken for granted in the present treatise. Here is no new doctrine. Salvation is in Christ Jesus, and in no other: I am, says he, *the truth*, the one saving truth, like himself, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—one Lord, one faith, one salvation. And whoever believes this aright is in a safe state, in which there is no change with respect to God; no variableness or shadow of turning. Whatever his own apprehensions may be, the word of the Lord endureth for ever. He may be tempted in a legal hour to cast away his confidence, but the counsel of the Lord shall stand. He may change, but I, saith God, change not. For the gracious gifts and calling of God are without repentance—they are such that it cannot repent him of bestowing them, or of continuing them, when once bestowed. As the believer has no new truth to learn, only to improve the principles of the doctrine of Christ; so he has no new title to expect. Under the free grant and gift of God, salvation comes to him of grace in the most sovereign way that can be conceived: and his warrant to receive it is the divine command: and when he has been enabled to receive it by the obedience of faith, the divine promise assures him that he shall not perish for his sins, but that he shall have everlasting life. Believing the promise, is the best title that possibly can be to this salvation; for we are saved freely by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, neither salvation nor faith; both are the gifts of God; and under the title all the blessings which accompany salvation are included, all the things which are freely given to us of God—a sufficiency of present grace, and the full possession of eternal glory. This is the good old foundation, upon which the heirs of promise have always built their faith and hope. They knew that all fulness was in Christ for their use and enjoyment; and they were persuaded that they should honour him most by believing this with the strongest certainty. They could not trust too soon, nor too much, to his faithfulness. And therefore they come boldly to the throne of grace, that they may receive out of his fulness at all times, for all things, for body and soul, for earth and heaven, what they wanted, and what he had promised. The more they live thus by faith, they will experience more occasion to rejoice in the Lord; and to find that his arm to fulfil will always go as far as his promise, even to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. This indeed is strong faith; but it is the gift of a strong God: it does not depend in the least on what the believer can do for himself, but on what the Almighty has engaged to do for him, and in him, and by him; for he requires and commands it in this high degree: there is grace sufficient to bring it into use and practice, as far as the commands go; all things promised being possible to him that believeth; and they who have trusted most to the faithfulness of God, who, against hope, believed in hope, have experienced that God did never leave them nor forsake them. He magnified his word above all his name. There he has made his name to shine forth, and all his attributes are magnified in their greatest perfection; the believers on earth, and the saints in heaven, praise God for his word, because it is the

instrument of his Spirit, by which he bestows grace, and according to which he gives glory. The fulfilling of his word runs through time, and will run through eternity. Blessed be God for his word of promise! Blessed be the Lord, that it will be fulfilling for ever and ever. This being the case, it becomes necessary to inquire into the divine records, and to see what a full warrant God has given us to trust and not be afraid: and this to every believer, there being the same ground to believe with the strongest faith, as to believe at all.

This inquiry is the more necessary because of the place which faith holds in our religion. It reaches to the whole of it; so that nothing is good before God, however fair and specious it may appear to men without it. The conscience, the heart, and its affections, are purified only by faith. All duties, for their right motive, and for their acceptance, depend upon it. Without faith it is impossible to please God. No trials and afflictions can be patiently and profitably endured, unless faith be in exercise. Our whole warfare is carried on, and can be, by our being strong in the Lord, and fighting in the power of his might, finished victoriously only by faith. Indeed it enters so much into every thing wherein we have to do with God, that the strengthening of it is the strengthening of every other grace, which are weak or vigorous according as more or less faith enters into them. And therefore the scripture encouragements for our growth in faith should be well weighed with much prayer, frequent meditation, and thanksgiving, that they may have their proper effect upon the believer's heart and life. And as this can be done only by power from on high, assistance must ever be sought from thence, and depended upon. The Holy Spirit is the very breath of spiritual life and of all spiritual activity. Every godly motion of the heart is from his holy inspiration. So the scripture teaches, 2 Cor. iii. 5: "Not that we (even apostles) are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." So we are taught to pray:—O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.* (Fifth Sunday after Easter.) And again (the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity):—O God! forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A great divine has thus expressed the same sentiments:—

"In those who are truly converted, all saving truths are transcribed out of the scripture into their hearts. They are taught of God; so as they find all truths, both concerning the estate, and the gracious and happy estate of man, in themselves. They carry a body of divinity in them, and about them; so as from a saving feeling they can speak of conversion, of grace, of the Spirit, &c. and from this acquaintance are ready to yield and give up themselves to truth revealed, and to God speaking by it. And thus a man may know his estate before God, by his relish for the word. There is a heavenly and divine relish in the word of God; as for instance—Take the doctrine of his providence, that all things shall work together for the best to them that love God. What a sweet word is this! A whole kingdom is not worth this promise—That whatever befals a Christian in this world, there is an overruling Providence to sway all to good, to help forward his eternal good—that Christ will be present with us in all conditions—that he will give us his Holy Spirit—that, when we confess our sins, and lay them open, he is merciful to forgive them—that, if our sins were red as scarlet, they shall be as white as wool. What kind of incredible sweetness is in these to a heart that is prepared for these comforts! The doctrines of reconciliation, of adoption, of glory to come, of the offices of Christ, and such like, how sweet are they! They relish wonderfully to a sanctified soul. These truths that come out of the mouth of Christ, and out of the ministry concerning Christ, they are most sweet of all. Oh, how sweet were these words to the poor man—*Thy sins are forgiven thee.* Do you think they went not to his heart? The best discovery of a true affection to Christ, and of a true state in grace, is from our affection to the word of Christ. Wherever there is an interest in Christ, there is a high respect to the word.

A believer trusting to these helps, and making a diligent use of these means in reading the charter of grace, will find such a faith frequently described and required, as relies on the truth of God without doubt or wavering, as depends on his faithfulness to his promises, with the fullest confidence of the heart, and waits on his fulfilling them, steadfastly persuaded that he has spoken nothing with his mouth but what he will infallibly make good with his arm.

All the gifts and graces of God come to us in his promises, and cannot be received or enjoyed but in the way of believing. What, then, can be a greater encouragement not to stagger at any promise through unbelief, than that God has declared it is a service well pleasing and acceptable to him. It is high worship to be strong in faith, giving glory to God; for it is a gift of his love, and a grace of his Spirit, and his own special work in the hearts of his people. In the day of his power he makes them willing, and he enables them to set to their seal, that God is true. So we read—"By faith in Christ Enoch walked with God, and he had this testimony, that he pleased God; but without faith it is impossible to please him:" therefore Enoch's state, and his walk, and his translation, were all by faith. Now, we know that the judgment of God is according to truth; and that he has declared in the word of truth that whatsoever is not of faith is sin: so that it is impossible it should please a most holy God, who has magnified his word above all his name, and who delights to see his people do the same, magnifying it, by giving it the fullest credit of their hearts, and the most perfect dependence of their lives.

He has also required this by his express command:—This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, who has said, "Ye believe in God; believe also in me"—with the same faith and with the same worship: and when the gaoler inquired of Paul and Silas—Sirs, what must I do to be saved? they answered—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. And this belief is commanded in very trying circumstances, when the outward supports of faith seem to fail, and the inward comforts are at a very low ebb: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God," —his God still. That relation is always the same; and so are the blessings which are included in it, and which he cannot fail to bestow on those who honour his word in such trials of their faith, that, against hope they believe in hope; for blessed are all they who put their trust in him.

For the farther confirmation of their faith, he has strengthened his commands with the most encouraging promises of grace to help in every time of need. Ask, and ye shall have; for he giveth to all askers liberally, and upbraideth not, come they ever so often, or ask ever so much; yea, our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him: and his influence goes as far as any promise; for he is the mighty power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Whatever is promised, he is almighty to fulfil. So we read, when our Lord cursed the barren fig-tree, the apostles marvelled that it presently withered away. Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive; for believing honours the truth of the promiser; and asking in prayer for the fulfilling of it, engages and secures the promised grace. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much; so much, that the prayer of faith hath opened and shut heaven. It has done wonders in removing mountains of difficulties, and conquering hosts of foes, which rendered it seemingly impossible that the word of God should be established. But faith gained the victory, and triumphed gloriously.

It has pleased God also to confirm all these arguments by revealing the motive on which he made the promises. It was love. They are all free-grace promises. In his counsels, in the revealing them, in the fulfilling them, love directs the whole. They are discoveries of what is in the Father's heart to his children, and are the means of conveying his fatherly blessings, especially such a persuasion of

his love to them as will work love to him, and they work by love. For we love him because he first loved us: therefore he speaks to them comfortably, addressing himself to them in the tenderest compassion, and calling them by the dearest names:—his chosen—his beloved—his adopted—his children—his friends—heirs, heirs of God—joint heirs with Christ, who is Lord of all—his peculiar treasure—his portion. These, and many other endearing names, are intended to convince them of his love, to win and engage their hearts in love to him, that, when it is given them to believe the truth of his promises, they might be certain of their fulfilment. God is love: he delighteth in his people. His heart is so set upon them, that, in his dealings with them, love has the appointing, the directing, and the blessing of all. His love to them had no beginning; and it will have no end. It bestows on the happy objects of it grace, and it secures to them glory. Love has crowned their Head; and love will crown all his members: for out of his fulness they are most freely invited to come, and take all spiritual blessings as the earnest of eternal. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon them! Who can believe it, and not love him again?

It has pleased God also to give us some examples of his singular favour to them who acted strong faith, and to whom he therefore administered strong consolation. The apostle says, "That whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." And then he prays, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost." And when the Holy Ghost gives it this blessed effect, he always fills the heart with gratitude and thankfulness. Thus it operated in the day when the believer was enabled to say, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou hast comforted me. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the fountain of salvation." Oh what reviving cordials did the father of the faithful draw out of it, who, against hope, believed in hope, that he should become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken: "So shall thy seed be: and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God:" and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform. For this heroic faith he is celebrated in scripture, and proposed to us for an example. One of his children was enabled to follow closely the steps of his faith, through a life of continual and great sufferings, and to triumph in the prospect of a violent death: "I am now ready to be offered up; and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."

We have another example given us in the fifty-sixth Psalm. On whatever occasion the prophet indited it, the Spirit of prophecy teaches us to apply it to the Son of David, who is Christ the Lord It describes his great trials and continual persecutions, and his invincible faith, by which he was carried through them, when all the world was against him. The whole Psalm is a prayer made up of the most perfect trust and confidence in the faithfulness of God to his word; and he assures himself that heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of it could fail. He had enemies, many, mighty, cunning, cruel, united together to destroy him, Acts iv. 27; but his heart was established, trusting in the Lord. He read, he knew, he believed the promises made to him, and without doubt or wavering, he waited for the fulfilling of them. Thus he viewed the Father's covenant engagements, who had declared: "Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee

in righteousness: and I will hold thy hand, and I will keep thee, and I will give thee for a covenant of the people," &c. On this rock he built his faith, and could not be moved: "The Lord God," says he, "hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back: I gave my back to the smiters, and my checks to them that plucked off the hair! I hid not my face from shame and spitting: for the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed: he is near that justifieth me. Who will contend with me? Let us stand together. Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me. Who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment: the moth shall eat them up." What an undaunted courage is here manifested! In this spirit of faith he prays—

"Be gracious unto me, O God, because fallen man would devour me: all the day long he is fighting against me, and oppressing me; all the day long mine enemies would devour me; for they are many who fight against me, O thou Most High. In the day, when I might have reason to fear, I will put my trust in thee: I shall praise God because of his word: in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me: all the day long they torture my words: all their devices are against me for evil: they assemble together; they hide themselves; they watch my steps as if they were waiting for my life. Shall they escape for their wickedness? In thine anger, O God, thou wilt bring these people under: thou numberest my wanderings; thou hast put my tears into thy bottle: are they not recorded in thy register? In the day when I shall pray unto thee, then shall mine enemies be driven back: this have I known for certain, because God is on my side: I will praise God, because of his word: I will praise Jehovah, because of his word: In God have I trusted; I will not fear what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God. I will pay my thanksgivings unto thee; for thou hast delivered my life from death. Wilt thou not also keep my feet from falling, that I may be able to walk in the presence of God, in the light of life everlasting?"

Oh what a perfect trust and confidence is this! And how loudly does it call upon us to look to his example, that God would give us grace to follow the steps of his faith! Observe, O my soul, and consider the pattern set before thee:—He had God on his side—the promises—the power—the providences of the Almighty. He knew that every step was marked, every tear noticed, and that God had them in the book of his remembrance. In this faith he met his trials, and came off triumphant. Notwithstanding his many weary steps, and his strong crying and tears under that sorrow, which never had its like, yet he knew that he should be heard—and he was heard: his enemies fell before him: but they rose and returned to the combat. Upon the word he casts his anchor again. He trusts to it; and he finds it firm and sure still. The storm is great; it continues; it increases; all thy waves and storms, says he to his God, are gone over me. But, my soul, trust thou still in the Lord: for my hope is in him. His word is my stay. It cannot be broken. I praise him for it; again I praise him for it. Trusting in it, now my fears are gone. God is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me. Oh what a pattern is here set for us! May the meditation upon it be useful. May the gracious Lord, who is the author and the finisher of the faith, bless the means of his appointing, for the strengthening of it. And in the use of them, looking up for the constant supplies of his Spirit, may he enable us to go on from strength to strength, keeping this example always in view, until he bring us in peace unto the end of our faith.

These are some of the scripture grounds upon which the triumph of faith is built. It stands upon the almighty power of God, as engaged to fulfil his word: for his word is his deed. To take him at his word is the proper exercise of faith. He hath promised, and it is done. To rest thus upon it, as what cannot possibly fail, is the foundation of Christian worship: and when it is established in the heart, in the love of the truth, it constitutes the chief of that service which is perfect freedom; for God has declared himself well pleased with our trusting to his truth and faithfulness. He has commanded us to do it without doubt or wavering; he has promised grace sufficient to enable us thus to believe; and

we cannot put too much trust and confidence in his arm and power. And he has also given us examples of those who honoured him with the fullest reliance of their hearts, and had reason to rejoice in the Lord, who keepeth promise for ever. Glory be to him for such encouragements of our faith! Oh that they may have their proper effect. May the Holy Ghost apply them by his grace, and give us such a faith as may be well pleasing unto God; such a faith as he has commanded, and for the full exercise of which he has made exceeding great promises. Help us, O God of all grace, to trust and not be afraid: for thou art faithful: thy word and thy promises give us full security to trust in the Lord at all times; because in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength: and blessed are all they who put their trust in him.

But by what ways and means shall these arguments and encouragements have their full effect? This is the main point; and it is settled beyond dispute upon scripture authority. The same Spirit, who revealed the promises, is also the fulfiller of them: and he is almighty. The blessing on the use of the means is entirely from him: it is he who teacheth man knowledge: and from him we are to seek it in prayer. With all our reading, hearing, studying, meditating upon the scriptures, we must look up to him for his divine teaching. If any of you, believers, lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all askers liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith. Here is a command and a promise. When we lack wisdom, which we always do, as much as we want breath, we are to ask it of the Spirit of wisdom, and it shall be given us. He will make us wise unto salvation. He will keep us in the use of means dependent on his leading us into all useful truth, and of his revealing to us the things which are freely given to us of God, to show them to us as realities, and to put us into the enjoyment of them as blessings. In this dependence on him, we live, and move, and have our being. Our spiritual life and faculties, and the exercise of them, and the improvement of them, are entirely from his influence. For the apostle, mentioning the several gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, says, "All these worketh that one, and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man his own gifts according to his own will." To him, then, we are to look up for every good gift and every perfect gift. Whenever we open the Bible, we should ask his light and his teaching. He is the chief commentator. He only can put the scriptures into our inward parts, and write them upon our hearts, so that we may experience them to be the power of God unto our own salvation. Our first reformers were of this sentiment, exhorting us to pray, that by the holy inspiration of God's Spirit we may think those things that be good, and by his merciful guiding may perform the same. Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful, that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (Ninth Sunday after Trinity.)

As they prayed, so they sang: for we meet with two hymns, inserted by the reformers in the Common Prayer Book, appointed to be sung at the ordaining of priests, and at the consecration of bishops. The first begins with these words—

Come Holy Ghost! our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire, &c.

Out of the second I quote some verses, not for any excellency of the poetry, but for the soundness of the divinity expressed in these lines:—

Come, Holy Ghost! eternal God!
Proceeding from above,
Both from the Father and the Son,
The God of peace and love.

Visit our minds, and into us
Thy heavenly grace inspire,
That in all truth and godliness
We may have true desire.

Thou in thy gift art manifold,
Whereby Christ's church doth stand,
In faithful hearts writing thy law,
The finger of God's hand.

According to thy promise made,
Thou givest speech of grace,
That through thy help, the praise of God
May stand in every place.

O Holy Ghost! into our souls
Send down thy heavenly light;
Kindle our hearts with fervent love,
To serve God day and night.

Strengthen and 'stablish our weakness,
So feeble and so frail,
That neither devil, world, nor flesh,
Against us may prevail.

Grant us, O Lord, through thee to know
The Father most of might,
That of his dear beloved Son
We may attain the sight.

And that with perfect faith also
We may acknowledge thee,
The Spirit of them both always,
One God, in persons three.

From these authorities it appears to be the doctrine of the scriptures, and of our reformers in harmony with them, that spiritual life and knowledge, and faith in Christ, and hope in him, that maketh not ashamed, and holy love, with every godly motion of the heart, come from the holy inspiration of God the Spirit. It is from him that we understand the scriptures in the mind of the Spirit: it is from his grace that we grow in scripture knowledge, and persevere in the use of means, and at the same time in a constant dependence on his presence in them, for the furtherance and joy of our faith. He begins, he carries on, and he perfects our learning in his revealed word and will. Oh that he may make us, and keep us good scholars, in abiding sense of the necessity of his divine teaching! that the Spirit and the word may go together in our Bible studies, and our Bible experience: so that this may be the daily prayer of our faith:—

O thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who has taught us that secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us, and to our children for ever; open the eyes of our understanding to understand what is revealed in the scriptures for our use. Dispose us to hear them, read them, and meditate on them, with profit. And help us to mix more faith with them, that they may become more precious. In every day's reading, grant that we may find them to be the engrafted word, and that we are really branches grafted into the tree of life, and by the rain, and shining of heaven, enabled to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit abundantly. For all these blessings keep us ever dependent on thy divine teaching, that our fruits may grow richer and riper, we may be more humble in our hearts, and more thankful in our lives: and so we who can learn nothing as we ought without thee, may by thy grace be made wise unto eternal salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus—to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Spirit, be equal honour and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

CHAPTER III.

The believer's triumph in the Lord his righteousness.

The object of his rejoicing is always one and the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, without any variableness or shadow of turning. It is Christ, God in

Christ, concerning whom the commandment runs—Rejoice in the Lord Jesus always, and again I say, rejoice; there being in him a fountain of joy springing up into everlasting life. What he is in his own wonderful person—what is revealed of his gracious works and ways in his dealings with the sinners of mankind—what he did for them in the days of his flesh—what he does in them by his Spirit in time—what he has promised to give them in eternity: in every possible view that can be taken of him, a believer may and ought to rejoice always, and that with a fulness of joy; for thus the apostle offers up his praise—"Now thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." For he has in his person every possible subject of triumphant joy. He is true and very God: and he is true and very man—God and man in one Christ. The prophet Isaiah foretold this marvellous union, and gloried in the prospect: For us men, and our salvation, a child is born, and a son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, because the child is the mighty God, and the Son is the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. This is the great mystery of godliness, of which the saints in the Old Testament sang with the sweetest melody in their hearts unto the Lord, as the prophet does in the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm, calling upon all in heaven and earth, with all their inhabitants, to join him in the praises of Immanuel: because his name alone is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth. So that New Testament saint felt it, who declared, that he accounted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him—found so united to him as to be one with him: for he was united to our nature, in order to bring about another most blessed union—He taking our nature, that we might take his—He made the Son of man, that we might be made the sons of God—He having the power of an endless life, that he might give spiritual and eternal life to all believers: for they, in the day of his power, are joined to the Lord by one Spirit—the same Spirit in the members as in the Head—that through him, their Head, they might be able to say, truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, by the bond of his Spirit. It is not possible for man to conceive higher things than our Lord has prayed for in these words: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me: and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." By virtue of this union with Christ, who is the head over all things to the church, his members have fellowship with him in his holy life: he is the Lord Jehovah their righteousness: For then he became subject to the law, and obedient to its precepts, born of a woman, and made under the law, that through his obedience many might be made righteous. Lo, I come, says he, to DO thy will, O God: and he did it by fulfilling all righteousness. As the surety for his people, what he did, when he magnified the law and made it infinitely honourable in all its demands, was for them, and for their justification, that it might be imputed unto them for righteousness, and they might be dealt with as righteous at the judgment-seat of God. In this the father of the faithful made his boast, and gloried all the day long: for we read that he believed in God, and God imputed to him righteousness, loving him as his friend, and blessing him in all things. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: for the children of believing Abraham are freely made heirs, as he was, of the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ. Hear with what heart-felt joy one of them celebrates his triumphant state in Christ: "I will hope continually, and I will praise thee more and more—my mouth shall show forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation all the day: for I know not the numbers thereof: I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine ONLY." He found the blessings flowing from it numberless, and endless: so that it was all he wanted for his justification to life, and for his title to glory—it ONLY. In the same Psalm, admiring and

adoring the wonders of the gift of grace, he breaks out: "Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, who hast done great things. O God, who is like unto thee?" He was so complete in this righteousness of Christ, that he would mix nothing with it for his free access to God, or for his full acceptance before God. He knew that his righteousness of faith was appointed of God, was the gift of his grace, and was all-sufficient, being an everlasting righteousness: and therefore it effectually removed the consciousness of sin from his heart, and enabled him to come boldly to the throne of grace, where he stood perfectly justified in Jesus. And in the same spirit we hear a New Testament saint resolving to exclude all glorying, except in Christ, and in his righteousness, "in whom God can be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? By the law of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, and that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." This was the apostle's highest ambition—to be found in his precious Saviour. Oh that I may rejoice in him through life, and may be found in him at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment—found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ—the righteousness which is of God by faith Blessed testimony for Jesus! Encouraging example to place our whole trust and confidence in the Lord our righteousness, and our strength! For he is the same to us as he was to the apostle Paul; and we have as good reason to triumph as he had, because it is written, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels: for as the earth bringeth forth its bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring before all the nations." This is the righteousness of faith, and these are the fruits of it, which abound to the glory of God, even peace with him, joy in him, a holy walk with him, and a victorious warfare by him. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. Herein to glory is the believer's bounden duty. He is called to it as his gospel privilege, and according to his faith he does triumph in it as his present happiness, and as a good ground for his hope of eternal joy. Wonderful blessings are promised to this faith and hope; and they are truly experienced at this day. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for his providing such a garment for glory and beauty. He has warranted thee to put it on; and having through it free access into his presence, he has commanded thee to join that great multitude whom no one can number, who are standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and who cry with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever!" Their robes are as white as the light, being washed clean in the blood of the Lamb; and through him they have conquered, as the palms in their hands denote; yea, are more than conquerors; having crowns of righteousness upon their heads, which can never fade away; for grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh! what matter of triumph is here! A righteousness absolutely perfect and everlasting! This greatly enhances all our high joys in Christ, that there is full security for their continuance. It depends on the faithfulness of God to his word and promise, fixed in his eternal counsels, and established upon immutable things. "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord, and mine is an everlasting righteousness. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." The state of a believer is always one and the same on God's part. He may vary in his apprehension of his state; but with God there is no variableness or shadow of turning. He may be a believer walking in darkness—tempted to doubt; he may pay too much attention to sense and feeling—may get into a legal spirit—his evidences may be clouded: when

outward things and providences seem to make against him, his faith may be sore tried, and he may stagger at the promises of God through some fit of unbelief; the man changeth, but God changeth not; his mercies are sure mercies; they cannot fail; for they spring from the ocean of grace, and are streams which no created power can cut off; but they shall infallibly return to it again, and shall bring with them all the happy objects of his love. The Father chose them, and gave them to his Son, who has all their names written in the Lamb's book of life: for them he lived and died: and when he presents them at the last day to the Father—"Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me;" not one of them shall be wanting; for the Holy Spirit is, by his office, the Lord and giver of life to them, and in the day of his power he enables them to receive Jesus, and to live by faith upon him, as members united to, and in fellowship with, their glorified Head. This covenant of the blessed Trinity is unalterable, being ordered in all things and sure. All the subjects of its grace shall infallibly be saved, according to our Lord's promise, and according to our Lord's prayer, *viz.* "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Trusting to these immutable securities, the heirs of promise are commanded to draw strong consolation, even to rejoice in Jesus with a fulness of joy, in darkness as well as walking in light—in winter as well as in summer—in adversity as well as in prosperity—in death as well as in life—because he has all power in heaven and earth to make good to them every covenant engagement: and he will do it; for the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and shall come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

O thou most blessed God and Saviour! thou art the Lord our righteousness and our strength. I believe that the whole Israel of God shall be justified ONLY by thee, and in thee ONLY shall they glory. Oh! let thy Spirit abide with me to increase in me this faith, that by fresh supplies of his grace I may be kept from going about to establish my own righteousness, and may constantly submit myself to the righteousness of God. And by the same grace help me to bring forth the fruits of righteousness abundantly unto the glory and praise of God, magnifying thine atonement in the peace of my conscience, exalting thy righteousness in the love of my heart, and in my walk and warfare glorifying thy fulness: so that out of it I may receive a sufficiency of grace, by which I am now enabled to bless thee for the hope of glory. To thee, almighty Jesus, for the work of righteousness, which is peace—and for the effect of righteousness, which is quietness and assurance for ever—to thee be everlasting praise. *Amen* and *Amen*.

CHAPTER IV.

The believer's triumph in Jesus under a sense of the defilement of sin.

IT is in virtue of this fellowship with Jesus that believers are freely forgiven all their iniquities. His atonement was the work of our great High Priest, who was made sin for us, although he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. God is of purer eyes than to look upon the least iniquity: and there is a defilement in sin, which makes it exceeding filthy and abominable in his sight. He showed his utter abhorrence of it by establishing in the Old Testament such an abundance of legal pollutions as might exhibit to sense the defiling nature of sin, and might keep it ever before their eyes, and fresh upon their minds: and by making it necessary that the worshippers should be purified from these pollutions, and by establishing the means of their purification, and by forbidding every other, he would lead them to exercise faith in the great purifier, whose office it was to purge their consciences before they could offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. And it was a fixed law, that, if any one legally unclean neglected or refused the appointed means of being

cleansed, he was to bear his iniquity; for an unpardoned sinner can have no communion with a most holy God.

Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. The mind is the fountain from whence all the streams flow. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c.—these are the things which defile the man. An enlightened conscience is made sensible of this, and feels the necessity of being purified from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, in order to approach God and to have boldness and access with confidence to the throne of grace. His meditations at such times are like these:—

The more I know of myself, the more I am led to loathe myself, and to repent in dust and ashes; for I am a sinner, filthy and abominable altogether; by nature as vile as sin can render a fallen creature, and daily polluting myself in heart and life with fresh impurities. I have no means of cleansing myself; no hope that any thing in the creation can do it for me. Deep in my very constitution the stain remains. And I am forced to be crying out—Unclean! unclean! My case would be quite desperate if God himself had not provided a remedy, the report of which has come to mine ears in the gospel. Oh! it is blessed news—I welcome it to my heart—that God has opened a fountain which cleanseth from all sin. He has recommended it to me as having infinite virtue and everlasting efficacy to cleanse. And I have a command from heaven, vile and filthy as I am, to make use of it: for thus it is written—"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." When the Holy Spirit enables the sinner to believe the report, and to mix faith with it, then he has a warrant thus to pray—"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow—Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities—Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." And the Lord hears and answers the prayer in these words—"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses." The sacrifices from the beginning preached this blessed doctrine: their blood could sanctify by thy divine appointment to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, to purify the conscience from dead works to serve the living God! Blessed, for ever blessed, be his grace, who by his offering hath opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, in which the most polluted may wash and be clean: for Christ so loved the church, as to give himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it might be holy and without blemish: for his blood has infinite virtue to purify the foulest sinner, even so to cleanse him, that he may be perfect for ever: and the great use of faith is to receive it, and to apply it, even as God himself has recommended it; and it has lost none of its virtue. To this very day it purifies as perfectly as ever it did, and believers now in life, and in the hour of death, feel its divine efficacy as truly as the martyred Stephen did. I find a dying Christian thus proclaiming his faith and hope in it, when heart and flesh were failing him: "Am not I, my friends, a monument of God's rich free grace, of his boundless love and mercy in Christ? Oh! most extensive is the efficacy of his precious blood; for it has reached to me, one of the vilest of sinners: Oh! here is boundless goodness, unfathomable love: this blood has washed clean my soul, the seat of defilement, that was as black as hell; purified my conscience, that was darker than the grave, and made it brighter than the light: in a word, this blood will make me, who was vile, most vile, a child of hell, an heir of wrath, holy before God, and fit to live with God and the Lamb, with angels and the spirits of good men made perfect, to all eternity; and in a few minutes my soul shall be made perfect also. Oh! blessed,

for ever blessed, be God my Saviour, eternal praises be rendered unto thee." This is true faith, and high honour put upon the blood of Jesus, to seal God's testimony concerning it. He hath set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. Trusting to it, the foulest sins are washed as white as snow, and crimson sins as the purest wool. So the beloved says to his church —" Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art all fair; there is no spot in thee: thou art all glorious within." No angel can be whiter or purer, or stand more accepted before God, than he does who is washed in the blood of the Lamb. O blessed man, who hast obtained redemption by it! thou art commanded to enter with boldness into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—the way is open; thou art called to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having thy heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and thy body washed with pure water, that thou mayst hold thy profession of faith without wavering, as that great multitude did, who washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: they are now crying with a loud voice, " Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." They triumph indeed; and so mayst thou. Thou hast the same reason as they have. The same fountain, which washed their robes, cleanses thine—the same promises that it will—and thou shalt stand before God without spot of sin unto eternal salvation, as perfect as they. Jesus is thy Saviour, as truly as he is theirs: even to-day, thy conscience purged from guilt and thy heart purified by faith, thou mayst enter within the vail, and make sweet melody in thy heart unto the Lord thy God. Our elder brethren round his throne are employed in the same delightful work: we do it here as well as we can; they in heaven, and we on earth—the same subject in the church below, as well as above, and the same employment. We try to sing the praises of the worthy slaughtered Lamb in as high a note as they do. And when we fail, we try again, praying the Holy Spirit to enable us to keep in tune with them, that our songs may daily be more spiritual and heavenly. A poet of our own, feeling something of this harmony, would have us to celebrate the triumphs of the Lamb of God in these words:—

There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb! thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing thy power to save,
When this poor lisping stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

The song of heaven is upon this same subject. The Holy Ghost has taught us the very words of their divine hymn, and what is the harmony of all the redeemed round the throne with one heart and one voice, blessing God and the Lamb. Oh that he may tune our hearts to join the chorus, and fit us now to sing in as high a strain as we can, and every day to aim higher, till we come to the completion of the heavenly vision thus described by the apostle:—

" After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, whom no one could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: these are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made

them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And they sang with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever!—Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. *Amen.*"

CHAPTER V.

The believer's triumph over sin in its guilt.

The forgiveness of sins is the grand doctrine of salvation, on which peace with God is built. Sin is present with the believer, but pardoned. Sin is felt, but ceases to condemn. This is the chief difficulty in experience. How the truth of God, and his holiness, and his threatenings, and the honour of his law can be maintained, and yet he can be faithful and just to forgive us our sins. The believer may be often shaken in his mind, and troubled with legal fears and workings, if he be not so well established by the Spirit and word of God as to submit in his conscience to God's way of pardoning sin: it was always one and the same, contrived and appointed in the everlasting councils of the blessed Trinity, and revealed upon the entrance of sin; *viz.* that a person in Jehovah would become incarnate, and take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. To him Moses and all the prophets gave witness that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. The proclamation of grace holds it out most clearly. When Moses was permitted to see his glory, the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Every sacrifice preached this same truth visibly, showing the death which the sinner deserved, and the divine method of pardoning it, through faith, in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; for Jesus is the very paschal Lamb who was sacrificed for us: and the deliverance which they experienced in Egypt, through the sprinkling of his blood, we feel the same in our hearts unto this day: through faith they kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them: through the same faith we keep the same feast, and having found redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, we live safe out of the reach of the destroyer. We know our danger as they did, and we look to the Lamb of God for safety. It is the Holy Spirit who convinceth both of sin and of pardon. His conviction of sin makes an impression upon the conscience of its infinite evil. He stops the sinner's mouth, and makes him subscribe to all that is said in scripture of his guilt and of his danger. Looking at himself under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of the law, he is made to submit to the sentence of condemnation, and has nothing of his own to plead in arrest of judgment. Thus he is taught to think of the law, as God does, both of its precepts and penalties. He sees infinite justice, and holiness, and truth armed against him, and the desert of his sins to be everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, which he has no power to resist, and no means to escape. When the Holy Spirit convinces him of righteousness, and manifests the grace of God, in the free forgiveness of his sins, yet still he feels the exceeding wickedness of them. He loathes and abhors himself, as the subject of them, and groans, being burthened with the abiding sense of his corruptions. At his very best it is—O wretched man! who shall deliver me, &c.—but at the same time he can rejoice in God his Saviour—I thank God through Jesus Christ—He is the propitiation for my sins, and I have

found peace with God through faith in his blood. Thus the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. He gives a faith steadfast in the atonement of Jesus, and settles such a peace in the conscience, as answers all charges from sin and from unbelief. And hereby he fulfils the proclamation of grace in the New Testament, which agrees exactly with the sentiments of the Old. When our Lord sent out his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature, his commission to them runs in these words: "And Jesus said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." They were to warn sinners of their danger, and to call upon them to look to Jesus, and to him only, for salvation. For he who commandeth all men every where to repent hath exalted Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto his people, and forgiveness of their sins. It is a gift of his royal grace—one of the high honours of his exaltation—that he can freely forgive every iniquity, and transgression, and sin, be they ever so many, or ever so great. For Jesus can take away all iniquity, and receive the sinner graciously.—We, says Peter, are witnesses of these things: and so also is the Holy Ghost; whom God hath given to them that obey him—that come at his call in the gospel, and obey it: the Holy Ghost, turning them from self to Christ, from sin to righteousness, from a life of sense to a life of faith, thereby witnesses their true conversion, which is a continual work of his grace in that repentance which is not to be repented of; and when he enables them to glorify God for this mercy, he gives great joy and peace in believing the forgiveness of their sins, according to the commission which our Lord gave to St. Paul at his conversion: "I send thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." When this commission is opened to a sinner in his name, and credited by the power of his Spirit, then the conscience is purged from guilt, by that one offering which perfecteth for ever. The believer in it has a clean heart given him. It is sanctified, and made a temple for the worship of the true God. To this the word witnesses—And the Holy Ghost is also a witness to him, that he may now enter with boldness into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus—Every possible hindrance being removed, he may have access with confidence to the throne of grace—to a Father of mercies, loving him, and blessing him with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. When he lives up to these privileges, then he feels as he ought to do. His faith relying steadfastly upon the divine promises, and giving full credit to a faithful God, he has a good conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God, and, his heart consecrated for this service, he may sing of pardon and peace in as high a note of praise, and with as much spiritual joy, as ever any believer experienced. They had much in the Old Testament, when they sang the triumphs of the Lamb of God, in the twentieth Psalm: the argument of which is thus given us in Bishop Horne's Comment. "1—4. The church prayeth for the prosperity of King Messiah going forth to the battle as her champion and deliverer, for his acceptance by the Father, and for the accomplishment of his will;—5, 6, 7. She declareth her full assurance of faith, and her resolution to trust in him alone, and not in the arm of flesh;—8. She foreseeth the fall of her enemies, and her own exaltation; and 9. concludeth with a prayer to the God of her strength." As long as the temple stood, and the service of God was regularly carried on in it, the true worshippers had every day a solemn commemoration of that sacrifice which was to put away their sins. They were taught to look to that precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, whom God hath set forth in every sacrifice to be the great propitiation and atonement, through which alone they were to expect pardon and peace. While the lamb was burning on the altar, every morning and evening, they celebrated his praises with the choicest instruments of music, and with the sweetest voices, making also melody in their hearts at the same time unto the Lord. Among other hymns given by inspiration of God for this joyful occasion, they used to sing the twentieth Psalm, in which they triumphed

in the God of their salvation, and declared their faith and hope in him in full concert, after this manner:—

"Jehovah will hear thee: in the day of trouble the name of the God of Jacob will defend thee: he will send thee help from his sanctuary, and he will strengthen thee out of Sion: he will grant thee according to thy heart, and he will fulfil all thy purposes: then we shall shout for joy in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we shall set up our banners, when Jehovah shall fulfil all thy requests. Now I have known that Jehovah will help the Messiah, his Christ, and will answer him from his sanctuary with the mighty power of the right hand of Jesus. Some put their trust in chariots, and others in horses; but we will cause the name of Jehovah our Alehim (the Trinity in covenant) to be remembered: they are brought down and fallen; but we are risen, and made still to stand safe; for the king (Jesus) will put forth his power to save us: he will answer us in the day when we pray unto him."

These are the words of the hymn, in which they express their faith in the future triumphs of the Lamb of God, and their hope in that one offering of his which was to perfect them for ever. The divine appointment, the divine acceptance, the divine application of his sacrifice, is the most noble subject that could be sung upon earth: indeed it is the subject of heaven, and will be the harmony and concert of eternity. May the Holy Ghost put our hearts in tune to join in it, and to adore and bless the Lamb that was slain, setting up our banners as they did, Rom. viii. 31, 32, 33, 34, conquerors over sin and Satan, and all their enemies. We have the same Jesus to rejoice in, and as good reason as ever believers had to rejoice in him with a fulness of joy. When the heart feels as happy as it can be here in God the Saviour, these are some of the delightful exercises of faith in his blood:—

Oh what am I, that such a sinner as I am should be thus highly favoured? A child of wrath by nature, even as others, and by practice—having sinned long with greediness—against light and conviction—sinning and sorrowing—sorrowing and sinning from year to year—a slave to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eyes, and to the pride of life, every moment fit and ripe for hell. Oh what a monument of infinite patience and long-suffering!—spared from day to day, and at last called to the saving knowledge of Jesus. Oh what exceeding riches of grace are these—that the Father would choose me in the Beloved, and give him to save me from sin and misery, that he would send his Spirit to quicken me, and to enable me to believe that there was mercy in Jesus for me, even for me, and plenteous redemption! What sinners can be more indebted than I am for such miracles of grace? Glory be to God in the highest! My Lord Jesus, the great God and my Saviour, gave himself for me, that he might redeem me from all iniquity, and might cleanse me from all sin: trusting to his atonement, and to his righteousness, I am led to admire the Father's full absolution: "Thy sins and thine iniquities I will remember no more." Thanks be to him for this unspeakable gift. He has pronounced them blessed, and he has caused me to feel some of their blessedness, whose iniquities he has forgiven, and whose sin he has covered; and therefore I look forward with thankfulness to the great day of redemption, when Jesus will present me to himself, holy and without blemish, as if I had never sinned. In this hope of salvation I triumph before God. Now I see the felicity of thy chosen—I rejoice in the gladness of thy people—and I glory with thine inheritance. Unto him who chose me in his Son—unto him who loved me and washed me from my sins in his own blood—unto him who gave me this faith and keeps me in it, for this fellowship with the eternal Three—be eternal praise. *Amen.*

CHAPTER VI.

The believer's victory over the dominion of sin.

We have heard from scripture some of the victories of faith over sin in its pollution and in its guilt; but there is still a hard warfare to be maintained

against its dominion; for it reigneth absolutely in the children of disobedience, and it never ceaseth to strive for mastery in the children of God, who have an evil nature still—an old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and who is to be put off every day—denied in his desires—mortified in his affections, and crucified in his appetites. Thus the commandment runs: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth." And the new man, who is called to this warfare, is ordered to make use of Christ's fulness for promised courage, and strength, and victory; for without Christ he can do nothing. Sin is himself—he is a body of sin—and he has not only to fight against himself, but also against principalities and powers, hosts of foes, united under the banner of the god of this world, trying all their cunning, and all their force to bring the believer back into the bondage of corruption; and what he has of his own is on their side. His worst foe is his indwelling sin, which has a complete body with all its members and lusts, always enticing to something unlawful, and tempting to the commission of it. Every faculty is ready to become an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin. It is an absolute tyrant, who rules his slaves with the most cruel rigour, keeping them captive to his will, although nothing but destruction and misery be in their ways.

Thus original sin is described in the ninth article of our church—it is the fault and corruption of every man born of Adam; and notwithstanding it still remaineth in the regenerate, yet there is a promise of daily and of complete victory over the tyrant. Thus it is written, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace." Once sin had full dominion, but it is taken away by the Spirit of Christ; not entirely destroyed, as to its being, but as to its ruling power—dethroned in the judgment; there seen as it is, exceeding sinful, exceeding dangerous—dethroned in the conscience; the believer no longer under the law, but under grace, is freed from condemnation—dethroned in the will; not my will, Lord, but thine be done—dethroned in the heart; I hate all evil thoughts, but thy law do I love! oh what love have I unto thy law;—dethroned in the life; crucified with its affections and lusts, by the power of the cross of Jesus. It is not quite dead, but it is put to a lingering death, kept upon the cross, dying daily. And thus the sin which is pardoned through the blood of Christ is conquered by the arm of Christ, as it is written, "He will subdue our iniquities;" and faith in his promised help keeps them under, subdues them effectually, so that they do not reign in the mortal body to obey them in the lusts thereof. Take an instance of this triumphant faith. Whatever the natural man can set his heart upon, or seek his happiness in—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life—Moses was enabled by the Spirit of Christ to overcome: "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." What but almighty grace could have given him such a complete victory? He gained entire dominion over sin, even when it came to tempt him with all the pleasures, and riches, and honours of the world. He was made strong in faith: Christ, ruling in his heart, brought every high thought into subjection to himself: so that Moses not only resigned all his temporal advantages for Christ's sake, but what natural men account a great paradox, he chose reproach, poverty, misery, rather than give up his interest in Christ. This is the victory which still overcometh the world, even our faith; for the New Testament furnishes us with such another instance of Christian heroism in the apostle of the Gentiles: his giving an account of his own experience, and by what means he was now no longer under the law but under grace—a sinner saved from the sentence of the broken law, and from all hope of being made righteous by his own personal keeping of it—"I, through that law," says he, "am dead to the law, that I might live unto God," &c. Once he was alive without the law—when he thought proudly of his own good life, that, concerning the law he was blameless—but when the commandment came in the power of the Spirit, then it slew him, and killed all his former legal hopes. What he had trusted in before for life, he now found to be unto death; and Christ, faith in Christ, was the only

means by which he saw he could live unto God, by his grace and to his glory. By this faith he then experienced the power of the crucified and risen Jesus: I am in Christ, says he, crucified with him, truly and spiritually dead to sin, to self, to the world, by the virtue of his cross: nevertheless, by the same faith in the same Jesus, I live; the Spirit of life in him has quickened my spirit: he has given me a new birth into the spiritual world, and has brought me to live upon the fulness of Jesus, as really now by faith, as I hope to live upon him by sense in heaven; "Yet not I;" I neither had it of myself, nor do I continue it by any act of my own, "but Christ liveth in me: and although I seem to live outwardly like other men, yet the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," depending upon him every moment for fresh supplies of his Spirit, to keep me in union and communion with the Father and the Son; and thereby he gives me to feel in my heart some of the blessings of that love of God in Christ which surpasseth knowledge. It is this that purifies my soul, and sanctifies my life: blessed, for ever blessed be his name, who thus loved me, and gave himself for me.

Such were the heroes of Christianity: they fought the Lord's battles, and in the power of his might they subdued sin: they obtained dominion over it through faith in Jesus. And the same faith in the same Jesus is still mighty through him to obtain as great victories. The truth of his promise, the faithfulness of the promiser, the strength of his arm to fulfil his promise; these did not fail Moses, nor Paul—never did, never can, fail any believer. Thus speaketh the Lord unto them: Sin shall not have dominion over you; having pardoned it by my blood. I will subdue it by my Spirit: trust me, you shall find strong faith an overmatch for strong sin; because it fights in the strength of Jesus, to whom all things are possible, and who must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. And sin and death shall be no more. Say, it is a besetting sin: this only gives more employment for faith, and for the power of Jesus. It may be a sin of constitution, breaking out into wrath and passion, that the man has no government of himself; but the Spirit of Christ can make him a new creature, and can enable him to put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It may be a long habit of sin: but is any thing too hard for the Lord? Has he not promised —"A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments and practise them." Wherever grace reigns, this scripture is fulfilled. The armies of the Lord of Hosts fight under his banner, and no weapon formed against them can prosper: kept by his mighty power, they are daily more than conquerors, marching on triumphant over all opposition; for he enables them to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end. Thus they were commanded to pray: "Order my steps, O Lord, according to thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." They looked to his word, and to his arm, for the right ordering of their steps, believing that he would keep the steps of his saints, and sin should not have dominion over them; now they were no longer under the law, but under the kingdom of his grace. The victory which he had promised, they expected; and he did put forth his power, according to that good word wherein he had caused them to place their trust. They found his grace sufficient to subdue the tyranny of iniquity; yea, where sin had abounded, grace did much more abound in daily victory over its wiles, and its assaults: and the power of Christ resting upon them, they were kept in this spirit of prayer.

O thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith, and I may have his strength to set against the power of my sins and mine enemies. For orders, for courage, for perseverance, for victory, for eternal triumph, I look unto thee for all. Blessed be thy name, that thou hast chosen me to be a soldier, and to fight under the banner of Jesus. I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. He made all mine enemies his own; and they are now under his feet; and I believe, according to thy good word, that thou wilt put them under mine. Thou hast conquered them for me, and hast engaged to conquer them in me, and by me. It is of thy mere grace, almighty Jesus, that

I am enabled to deny myself, to take up my cross, and to follow thee in this holy war. All my sufficiency is from the fresh supplies of thy Spirit. Oh grant me then abundantly to the increase of my faith, and to the praise of thy promised help. Cause me to depend every moment upon it; let me experience that when I am weakest in myself, I may be made strongest in the Lord. And when I have nothing left me to glory in of mine own, then my soul may magnify the Lord, and my spirit may rejoice in God my Saviour. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid, because the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: He also is become my salvation. To his grace and power be all the glory for ever and ever. *Amen* and *Amen.*

CHAPTER VII

The believer's triumph over his troubles.

After sin is pardoned, and the pardoned sinner is enabled to fight the good fight of faith against it, yet there is another enemy assaulting him to the last moment of his life. Fallen man is born to trouble. The man in Christ is so far from being exempt, that many are the troubles of the righteous. He is, in common with others, liable to pain and poverty, and to afflictions of every kind: He is by his very profession exposed to some of the most trying nature—his owning Christ—his following Christ—his conformity to Christ—give offence, provoke the malice of wicked men, and the rage of wicked spirits. Wave does not follow wave more certainly than every day brings its fresh troubles, and forces the believer to seek for aids and comforts out of himself. This is a sore fight of afflictions. To bear up under them with any patience, and to reap profit from them, is a task above the power of mere man. Every little pain stirs up murmuring and impatience; and this rebellion against God's will is the parent of a thousand fretful tempers: and these, exercised by sharp suffering, render the man truly miserable. If his suffering continues long, increases much, it often drives the poor sinner to despair; and if he has no Saviour to flee unto, he is sometimes guilty of self-murder, and dies in the act of sin, rushing headlong into everlasting destruction—the wisdom of man, of Cato himself, furnishing no better remedy against the numerous evils of human life.

To man thus exposed to suffering, and helpless under it, his suffering remaining as long as sin remains, how necessary must be the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has vouchsafed to give us his promises of help, suited to every possible case of distress. When it is his will that any of his people should be tried, he engages to make the trial of their faith much more precious than that of gold, which perisheth. He is with them, present with his divine supports and holy comforts. "Call upon me," says he, "in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me: Many are the troubles of the righteous; but out of them all the Lord delivereth them." They acknowledge it with gratitude; "God was our refuge and strength; we have found him a very present help in trouble;" helping us to bear up under the heaviest pressures, keeping his everlasting arms underneath us, as long as we suffer, and, if the sufferings increase, increasing our faith and patience until they have done their perfect work.

When, through the aids of his Spirit, these promises have their full credit, through his inward peace, which he alone can give, and which the world cannot take away—when he makes the heart to feel happy in God, enjoying the peculiar supports of the gospel, and living up to its privileges—then the believer finds the apostle's experience to be true—"always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," and sometimes with a fulness of joy, according to what is written: "But now, thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, *Fear not;* for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through

the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: *Fear not:* for I am with thee," to support, to deliver. This is spoken to the redeemed, who are God's property, and whom he bought with a great price. What could the Lord God engage to do for them more than is here promised, in order to still all their guilty fears, and to quiet all their natural fears? Trusting to the redemption that is in the blood of the Lamb, they are under his keeping; they go out in his strength to meet their trials and their enemies. Jesus is with them on their side; and therefore, believing in him, they need not fear any suffering. Jehovah is their Alehim, their covenant God in Trinity, their sworn allies, engaged by his almighty arm to save them from all evil, and to give them all possible good. "I the Lord," says he, "do keep thee—I will water thee with the dew of heaven every moment—lest any hurt thee, I will keep thee night and day." Having such great and exceeding precious promises, with what holy courage should the believer look up to a faithful God! and what strong consolation should they afford him when he is to go through the fire or through the water! He may sing with Jonah, "I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving—salvation is of the Lord." Or with the triumphant faith of the three children who were not afraid to go into the furnace, heated seven times hotter than usual, fully persuaded that, whether they lived or died, Jesus would be with them. Threatened with the burning fiery furnace if they refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image, "They said, O king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king." And he did; he went with them into the fire, and they walked in the midst of the flames unhurt. The same Jesus is daily repeating the same miracle. He has approved himself in all ages to be the friend of his afflicted people. Whatever he sends to them, he sends it with his blessing. So they testify—"We know that ALL things work together for good to them that love God." They knew it by his promise, and they felt it by experience: it is good for us that we have been in trouble: we have gone through many seas and storms of afflictions, and through the raging fire of persecution, not only unhurt, but benefited: for Christ was with us. As the sufferings of Christ abounded, so our consolation abounded by Christ: he feels for them as his members, and has bowels of the tenderest compassion. In all their affliction he is afflicted. He brings in his supports, and comes with his deliverance in the best time. He leaves no accusation of sin in the conscience, but gives and maintains a sweet peace with God. Oh what matter of triumph is it, when this peace rules in the heart! always, and by all means testifying—"Since God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Thanks without ceasing be to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain, for this complete and eternal victory over sin. The apostle carries on his praises, Rom. viii., that through Jesus all outward opposition shall fall before us—"Who shall separate us from Christ's love to us? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter: nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us." His love is in them all—appoints them, sends them, proportions them; and they conquer them all in his strength; not only conquer, but are more than conquerors: they are great gainers: they gain, what is better than all the world, fresh proof of his love; they gain experience of it: for they find that nothing can hurt them now he has taken them under his protection. For this his divine support we are taught to pray daily, asking it as a matter of mere favour, and expecting it only through the grace and intercession of our great High Priest:—

We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities, and for the glory of thy name turn from us all those evils which we most

righteously have deserved; and grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory, through our only mediator and advocate Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

When this is the prayer of faith, outward trials become inward mercies: for the Holy Spirit keeps the heart settled with its whole trust and confidence upon his promised help; so that if the trials increase, he makes them redound to the glory of God. If the outward man be a greater sufferer, even ready to perish, he renews the inward man day by day. He brings in abundant grace to sanctify abundant sufferings: whereby he satisfies the hearts of the sufferers, that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work for them a far more excellent and eternal weight of glory. The hope of this keeps them patient and thankful. By the power of the Holy Ghost they know this eternal triumph will be soon. Yet a very, very little while they will be favoured with the sight of the King in his beauty: they shall sit down with him in his throne, and shall reign with him for ever and ever.

For the further confirmation of our faith, he has set before us a cloud of witnesses, who testify, with one voice, that he sanctified all their troubles, and turned them into covenant blessings. So one of them said—"I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth: my soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad: O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together: I sought the Lord, and he heard and delivered me from all my fears. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Their very troubles become matter of triumph. He shut them up in the ark, and they were saved, when he drowned the world of the ungodly. Peter, speaking from experience, says, the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of their troubles, as he did righteous Lot, when he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. The more the Egyptians oppressed his people, the more they multiplied and grew. Behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. The fire of persecution raged against the church, but the blood of the martyrs was fruitful, and increased it both in number and in grace. The seed of the wicked one have been at enmity with the children of the promise from the beginning; but these trusted in the Captain of their salvation, and he led them on conquering and to conquer: "Through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." These and the other worthies mentioned, Hebrews, chap. xi. did wonders through Christ, who strengthened them: they loved not their lives unto death, fully persuaded that when he should call them to it he would be with them, and would enable them to finish their course with joy: and he did; for they all obtained a good report through faith, leaving us an example to follow the steps of their faith, and encouraging us to do it with holy boldness, whatever troubles we meet with in our way. We may, we ought to rejoice in tribulation; for we have the same Jesus to look unto, the author and the finisher of their faith and ours, the same promises of his support, the same almighty arm to make them good, and the same matter of triumph, which they experienced, whom he led on from strength to strength, until every one of them in Sion appeared before God. This is the certain heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness and salvation is of me, saith the Lord.

Of the same sentiments were our reformers, which they give us in these remarkable words in one of their prayers: O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom, defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies, that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

And to the same purpose, in one of their homilies, they thus express themselves: All correction which God sendeth us, in this present time, seemeth to

have no joy and comfort, but sorrow and pain; yet it bringeth with it a taste of God's mercy, and goodness towards them that be so corrected, and a sure hope of God's everlasting consolation in heaven. If, then, these sorrows, diseases, and sicknesses, and also death itself, be nothing else but our heavenly Father's rod, whereby he certifieth us of his love and gracious favour, whereby he trieth and purifieth us, whereby he giveth unto us holiness and certifieth us that we be his children, and he our merciful Father; shall we not, then, with all humility, as obedient and loving children, joyfully kiss our heavenly Father's rod, and ever say in our heart, with our Saviour Jesus Christ, "Father, if this anguish and sorrow which I feel, and death which I see approach, may not pass, but that thy will is that I must suffer them, *thy will be done.*"

O thou hope of Israel! the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble! I acknowledge my reluctance to take up thy cross, and my weakness in bearing it: hold thou me up by fresh supplies of thy Spirit, that I may be safe: let thy strength be perfected in my weakness. Thy promises of help are exceeding great: through thee I do believe the truth of them; and I pray for grace to make a right use of them. Enable me in patience to possess my soul, that when it is thy will to try my faith, I may live up to my privileges, and may find it better to suffer with Christ than to reign with the world. O Lord, thou hast showed this favour to Moses: and thou hast done more than this—thou hast made thy witnesses glorify thee in the fires—they have marched on, fighting thy battles against hosts of foes, and they did not account their lives dear to themselves, so they might finish their course with joy, and die in faith, blessing and praising thy holy name. O thou faithful God! thou art the same to us now, as thou wast to them. Lead me on, then, in thy strength, trusting in thy word, and leaning on thine arm. Thou hast promised thy flock; and I hope I am one of them—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." O thou good Shepherd! let me trust in thy love, and feel thy supports, that, whatever lies before me to be done or suffered, I may be enabled to do it and to suffer it by the continual supplies of thy Spirit. And by his influence help me to persevere, till I win the prize of my high calling, and be admitted to join that great company whom no one can number, who stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: these are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them; they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun smite them, nor any heat: for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. O my Jesus! I bless thee for this most glorious prospect: it is of thy mere grace that I am in any measure enabled to join that great company: it is entirely of thy special favour that I have any good hope to come to their glory: for this, and for all thy mercies, to thee, with the Father, and the eternal Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, I give honour, and glory, and thanks, to-day, and I hope to do it without ceasing for ever and ever. *Amen* and *Amen.*

CHAPTER VIII.

The believer's triumph over the infirmities of old age.

It is appointed unto all men once to die. The time is fixed by an immutable decree. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. If some be permitted to live longer, yet the infirmities

of old age must arrive, bringing with them labour and sorrow, the forerunners of death; circulation will become languid; the senses of the body will grow dull and heavy; the faculties of the mind will be impaired, and will discover it by not remembering proper names. In this decline of life believers are subject to the same infirmities with other men: they have no exemption from pain, or sickness, or death; but they have that which keeps up their spirits, and makes them patient and joyful. The consolations of God are then most needed: and he has promised them, and he is faithful: he never failed them who trusted in him. He has suited his promises to all the infirmities of age. He knows our frame perfectly, and has described it with an unerring pen, Ecclesiastes, chap. xii., that when we feel the signs of old age, we may apply to him for grace to profit by them. The symptoms there given are infallibly true and just, and are as so many monitors, warning the man that the vigour of life is declining, and that the body is returning to the earth from whence it came. Happy is he who takes this warning, and remembers his Creator in the days of his youth, before the wearisome days come, of weakness and pain. He has fled to Jesus for refuge—and finds and experiences what he has engaged to do for his people, when heart and flesh begin to fail them. Blessed be his grace for the abundant provision which he has made for their faith and patience: he says to them, "I will be with you; I will never leave you, nor forsake you: so that you may boldly say, The Lord is our helper, and we need not fear what the infirmities of age can do unto us." One of them, the Christian hero, thus encouraged himself in the Lord his God—"Thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust even from my youth: by thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee—I am a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge." This was his trust: and God did not forsake him. He remembered his word unto his servant, wherein he had caused him to depend. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto him. O what great encouragement have believers to follow the steps of his faith! for his God is their God; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, to young and old, who put their trust in him. His promise to the Israel of God cannot be broken. Thus he pledges his word of truth to them, giving them a warrant to pray unto him—"My mouth shall be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day long: for thou wilt not cast me off in the time of old age; thou wilt not forsake me when my strength faileth." To this prayer the Lord inclined his ear, and vouchsafed this gracious answer: "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb, and even to your old age, I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you; I have made and I will bear you; even I will carry, and I will deliver you." These are some of his rich cordials for the aged: he provided them in his love, and he is sensibly touched with the feeling of their infirmities, in administering them; for he himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. His compassions bind him to comfort and relieve his old disciples: and when they apply to him in the time of need, he is ever present to grant them his promised help; yea, so suited to their case, as to make them grow in grace, as they grow in years. They bring forth fruit in their old age, the rich fruit of humility, and the ripe fruit of thankfulness—fruit that endureth unto everlasting life. We have a happy instance of this in God's goodness to an ancient believer, who lived to be a hundred and seventy-five years old. He was the friend of God, who had blessed Abraham through life, and that in all things, and who even to hoary hairs loaded him with blessings. For God had promised him, "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age:" and the sacred historian, relating the fulfilling of the promise, says, "He gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people." His old age was good, in body and soul. Whatever infirmities he had, they were intended for good, and actually did him good. He was a very cheerful, pleasant old man. The peace of his mind had a sweet influence on his temper and behaviour. It kept him from being fretful and peevish in his family.

He was loving to his children, and kind to his servants; God himself being witness. He was also happy in his last years; for he spent them in faith; and when they came to an end, he died in peace; with his last breath he committed his spirit into the hands of him who had redeemed it, *full of years:* it is in the original one word—he was satisfied: so it is rendered, Psalm xvii. 15, "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake up after thy likeness." He was satisfied with what he had enjoyed of the favour and friendship of his God; who had been his shield to defend him from all sins and enemies, and also had promised to be his exceeding great reward: this he obtained, when he was gathered to his people, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the most blissful communion of the Three in Jehovah. All the children of faithful Abraham, treading in the steps of his faith, have the same God to deal with, who keepeth promise for ever. It is recorded of Isaac, the heir of the same promise with his father, that he died in the same faith, an old man. He was tried with many infirmities; but we read of no complaints, though he was a hundred and eighty years of age. He expired in praise and thankfulness, satisfied with life, and happy in the prospect beyond death. And his son Jacob, a hundred and forty-seven years old, when he was dying, declared that he had waited for the salvation of God: waiting faith is strong faith: and after he had blessed his children, and had given commandment concerning his bones, he quietly, as if he had been going to sleep, gathered up his feet into the bed, and died in peace, an old man, and satisfied. All these lived in the world, strangers and pilgrims, looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God: and they were not disappointed of their hope—they all died in faith—in an act of faith; and were gathered to their people—to the general assembly and church of the first-born. When they came to the end of their faith, they came to heaven. The moment they expired, they entered the city which God had prepared for them: and their bodies, sleeping in the dust, are in the covenant of life, and shall be raised and glorified in the morning of the resurrection: for our Lord proves that the dead shall rise, from this very circumstance: he says to the Jews—"Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." In this faith the patriarchs died: being children of the resurrection, they left their bodies in the hand and care of a covenant God, well assured that he would raise them up to glory and life everlasting, according to that good word wherein he had caused them to put their trust.

These examples of the loving-kindness of God to his aged servants were recorded for our learning, that believers, if God by his providence should bring them to old age, might be encouraged to trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with such a confidence of their hearts as not to doubt of the divine truth, or of the divine power. Whatever he was to them, he is the same to us—our God as well as theirs—our covenant God engaged to glorify both body and soul; on whom we are commanded to cast all our cares and concerns in extreme old age. If what is of nature be failing, what is of grace cannot. If the life of sense be dying, the life of faith should flourish the more: it is a life that cannot die; for the branches thrive and bring forth fruit in their old age, not of themselves, but because they are ingrafted into the heavenly vine, in which they live for ever. "I am the vine," says Jesus, "ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." But, through my Spirit strengthening you, he will make you bud and flourish, and fill the face of the world with fruit. He will so fill you with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Christ Jesus, to the glory and praise of God, that your last days shall be your best days.

In this view of old age, it may become a favourable time for exercising and improving faith; because the activity of the life of sense is abating, and thereby many things are removed, which before obstructed the growth of the spiritual life. Now is the time to learn to walk by faith, and not by sense. A believer, young in years and young in experience, is often tempted to judge of himself by his feelings more than by the word of God. In a good frame, he is a good

believer. Then all is well with him. But when he is walking in darkness, he is very apt to question his state—If all be right with me, why am I thus? My present frame is very dull and uncomfortable—I am not so lively as I used to be in prayer or in ordinances—my delight in God, and the things of God, is far short of what it was formerly—perhaps I have been deceiving myself, and crying Peace, peace, when there was no peace for me.

From this temptation age itself is a sort of deliverance: self-activity is weakened, and thereby, through grace, self-dependence. The believer, if he be a good scholar, will now learn to walk more by faith, and less by sight. The vigour of his senses is decaying. The high spirits of youth are abating. His present lesson is very plain and simple; and while he attends to what is passing in him, and about him, he has a thousand monitors, calling upon him now to learn and practise a perfect dependence on those things which are always one and the same, without any variableness, or the least shadow of turning. One record of God. One Saviour. One Spirit. One faith, of which the Saviour is the author and the finisher. This faith is made to grow and flourish, as there is less dependence on other things: and as age itself tends to weaken this dependence, it becomes, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, a favourable time to live less upon the things which are seen, and more upon the things which are not seen. Less of sense, more of faith. One scale rises as the other falls. The outward man dying, the inward man grows more lively—yea, grows up into Christ Jesus, and that in all things. O blessed old man! thou hast lived to a good time when this is thy experience; when in the prayer of faith thou canst cast all thy burdens on thy Saviour: "Lord, keep me, a poor helpless creature—now I feel that, of myself, I can do nothing as I ought, or as I wish to do—Glorify thy grace in me, and strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man, that I may bless thee for thy salvation, and for things which accompany salvation. Into thy faithful hands, for life and death, I commit myself and all my concerns; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth."

But it must be remembered, that old age does not produce these happy effects of itself. It is not of nature, but entirely of grace, that any one is able to gain such spiritual profit from bodily infirmities. The mere natural man, fortify him with all his boasted aids of reason and philosophy, yet he cannot help murmuring when age brings weakness, and sickness brings pains. He becomes peevish and fretful. Having no friendship with God, he cannot look up for divine supports when all human begin to fail him. Under a severe fit of the stone, or a long fit of the gout, he is often out of all patience. Uneasy in himself, he is out of humour with every body and every thing. How different is the believer in the same circumstances! His body feels pain as others do; but his mind is comfortable and at ease. Happy in God, he has patience given him to bear his sufferings, and grace to profit from them; yea, the peace of God rules in his heart always, and by all means.

An old man with this peace, which surpasseth all understanding, ruling in his heart, will be so far from complaining, that he has every thing to be thankful for which can render him blessed of the Lord. He is provided with an infallible antidote against all that old age can try him with:—It is true, I have an infirm body, but, thank God, I have a sound mind: age has brought upon me great weakness; but this makes more room for the power of God, that it may be perfected in my weakness. I have many pains, but not so many as he has comforts to give me: in the worst of them he keeps me patient. Father, thy will be done—I have an afflicted body, but I have a happy heart: although the outward man be perishing, yet I faint not, because the inward man is renewed day by day—My supports are great, the consolations of God not a few—I feel the symptoms of old age warning me daily of my approaching dissolution; through grace I take the warning—they find me living, and I hope they will find me dying, in the faith of the Son of God. The earthly tabernacle is taking down; but he does it with much tenderness and love, and assures me that he has prepared for me a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. May he who keeps it for me, and me for it, never leave me nor forsake me, till I be with him, where he is, and be like him, and enjoy him for ever and ever! Yet a very, very little while

—hold on faith and patience, and I shall see Jesus in his glory, which is the heaven of heavens.

O thou merciful and faithful high priest, Jesus Christ, I bless thee for thy kind promises to the aged. Thou hast suited them in great mercy to all their infirmities, and thou art always with them to help in time of need. I begin to feel the sad effects of sin in my body, weakening it, and tending to bring it down to its appointed end. To thee I look, almighty Jesus! for thy promised grace. Oh grant me constant supplies of thy Spirit, that I may profit by my infirmities, may exercise and improve my faith in thee, that they may keep me humble, and I may pray more in faith, and keep me thankful, that I may be more in praise. Thine arm is not shortened, nor can thy compassion fail. Stand by me then, and hold me up according to thy word. Make me strong in thy strength, that I may daily put more honour upon thy love and thy power. In the decline of life, let me not doubt of thy faithfulness to support, and, when thou seest it best, to comfort me. Vouchsafe me the consolations of God, when my heart and my flesh fail me: then be thou the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. When I am weakest in myself, then make me strongest in the Lord; and if it be thy holy will that I should become quite helpless, an infant again, make me lie quiet in thy hand, without murmuring or repining, but believing that thou art all my salvation, and enjoying in thee all my desire. Grant me this, Lord Jesus; for thy mercies' sake, let me die in faith. *Amen* and *Amen.*

CHAPTER IX.

The believer's triumph over death.

Man consists of two parts—a body and a soul. The bodily life is dependent on the light and air of this world, and on the circulation which they maintain and carry on. When this connexion is broken, the body expires, it loses all sense and motion, and is dead. So the life of the soul is dependent on the light and air of the spiritual world. Jehovah in Trinity is the Creator, the only fountain of being; and there can be nothing independent of him: Christ is the light, and the Holy Spirit is the breath or air of all spiritual life; and when this connexion is broken, although the soul may exist, yet its happiness in God is broken, and at an end. Sin, that great murderer, sin, brought death upon body and soul: "For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" and we read, The soul that sinneth, it shall die; sin separating it from its union, and thereby cutting it off from its communion with the Father of spirits. In the moment that Adam sinned, the spiritual death took place; for he had lost the spirit of life, and was dead in trespasses and sins: and that same moment his body became mortal, although he lived nine hundred years after. Thus we have sin, and death, and misery, entailed upon all his descendants, from the first Adam, who is of the earth, earthy. Oh how precious to a sinner in these circumstances should be the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who stands at the head of thy spiritual world, that he may give his righteousness, and his life, and his happiness, to all that believe in him! He comes Jehovah of hosts in our nature, as our champion to fight our battles, and to conquer all our foes. Immanuel was made sin for us, and he died for our sins according to the scriptures, when the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all, and was buried and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures. We read therein of his noble challenge to death and the grave: "I will ransom my people from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death—O death, I will be thy plague—O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." It was the Captain of our salvation, the Lord of hosts is his name, who purposed this in the everlasting councils, and in due time fulfilled it by his almighty power. "Because the children were par-

takers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and might deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Oh what infinite condescension is this! what love, surpassing all knowledge! the most high God is manifest in the flesh, that, as God in our nature, he might be our surety to act and suffer for us men, and for our salvation. Accordingly he takes our sins upon himself, bears the guilt and punishment of them in his own body and soul upon the tree, gives his own life a ransom for ours, that by his death we might live. He was buried, but he rose again the third day, having loosed the bonds of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. In this conflict with death and the grave, repentance was hid from his eyes. He knew what he was to go through, more than any of us can conceive of pain and agony, yet he would not change his purpose of grace, although he was to become obedient unto death, the most tormenting, the most shameful, even the death of the cross. His enemies having brought him to the grave and the sealed sepulchre, seemed then to have him in their power. So they thought: but here Jesus made his complete and eternal triumph. By his resurrection he swallowed up death in victory; for he did not rise as a private person, but as the first-fruits of the dead, drawing the joyful harvest after him. The Lord is risen indeed, the head of the body, the church, and has the power of an endless life to quicken all his members. In which most glorious prospect, the apostle, quoting the passage above mentioned, breaks out into these raptures of joy, seeing all his enemies vanquished, and nothing but bliss and glory before him—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." The law armed death with its sting, as the just wages of the transgression of the law: but Jesus, our surety, magnified the law by his holy life in all its precepts, and by his death in all its penalties. He died for our sins, and by his rising from the dead, he demonstrated that he had taken out its sting, and had disarmed it of its power to hurt; nay, had done much more—he had changed death unto life. "I am the resurrection and the life," saith the Lord; "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." By faith in him we share in the triumph and glory of his resurrection, and have a new song put into our mouths, with which we may make the sweetest melody in our hearts, even when our breath is failing us: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

These are scripture views of the almighty Jesus. Out of his infinite compassion he undertook to save his people from sin and death, the works of the devil. And he has done it. It is finished. He has put away sin by his sacrifice, and he completed his conquest of death by his resurrection; and has had witnesses of these gospel truths in all ages, whom he sent to preach repentance and remission of sins, in his name. When it is the good pleasure of his own will to accompany the message with power from on high, then he blesses it by making it the ministration of righteousness and of life: as it is written, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life," already. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed the believer from the law of sin and of death, and has also created in him a new life: he has given him a new birth into the spiritual world, and spiritual senses to fit him for spiritual enjoyments: for he is actually passed from death unto life. By the Holy Spirit as the agent, and by faith as the instrument, he is made a child of God, united to Christ, one with him, interested in him, and so closely joined to him, as the members are to the head, as to be a real partaker of all that he did upon earth, and of all that he is now doing for his redeemed in heaven. He has a good warrant; for he is not only permitted, but also commanded, to apply to himself all the privileges and blessings which are contained in this large charter of grace. "Ye are complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through

the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead: and you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us; and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross, and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross." In this view of the almighty conqueror of all our enemies, and of his enabling us also by faith to come after him, conquering and to conquer, what thanks and praises should be given unto him! There is no possible evil but he has removed it from us—and no possible good but he has obtained the right, and gives the possession. We are complete in him, our head—completely circumcised in heart by his circumcision, so as to put off the body of sin, and risen indeed with him by the faith of his own operation: through which we have the first resurrection from the grave of sin, and shall have the resurrection of the body from the grave of death. He now gives the first as a sure earnest of the second. He raises us from the grave of sin, and quickens us to newness of life, and thereby gives us a lively hope that we shall one day be with him and like him. In this hope the redeemed of the Lord have thus expressed their joys—We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners, in defiance of all our enemies—we need not fear sin, nor Satan, nor death, nor hell. Our Redeemer is strong: the Lord of Hosts is his name. He for us men, and for our salvation, was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. And he has destroyed them. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. His victory was complete, and in him we conquer. We come after him only to gather up the spoils of his triumph. Through faith in him, the sting of death is taken out of the conscience, and thereby the fear of it out of the heart—A believer ought to say, and when he is in his right mind he says with joy and gratitude—"The Lord is my light and my salvation; what then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid? Yea, though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil—I need not fear any, because thou, my Lord and Saviour, hast promised to be with me; thy rod and thy staff, they shall comfort me." What an infallible antidote has our Jesus here provided against all guilty fears, and against all natural fears! These promises to his dying followers cannot fail. He who made them is almighty to fulfil them, and almighty to enable us to believe that he will both support and comfort. Jesus, wonderful in his person, wonderful in all his works and ways—he has changed the very nature of death. He has turned it into life. Whosoever believeth in him shall never die, but is passed already from death unto life. The Holy Spirit has put him into present possession of a life laid up with Christ, out of the reach of death. So that when his body expires, it falls asleep in the Lord, and his spirit enters upon an eternal triumph of life and glory, among the spirits of just men made perfect.

Oh what a deliverance is this from the bondage of sin, and the terrors of the grave! It is the peculiar blessedness of believers in Jesus: for the natural man cannot but fear death, and look upon it as his enemy. He has no prospects but what are bounded by time. His whole happiness is in the present world, and in the enjoyment of what he calls the blessings of it. He was laying fine plans, and hoping to live to execute them—heaping up riches—living in the unrestrained liberty of sensual enjoyments—murdering his time—mispending his talents—without any concern about eternal things—when lo! an enemy comes, and puts an end to all his schemes. He dies. Perhaps he may be a sceptic, doubting of the certainty of a future state: he may wish there was none, but he can have no evidence: and if he continue to wish it, even to the last, oh what a scene will open when he meets a just and an angry God! He may be a materialist, and please himself with fancying that what we call his soul will vanish at his death into soft air; but the God of truth says, That when the dust shall return to the earth as it was, the spirit shall return to God who gave it: and in the morning of the resurrection Christ will re-animate the dust, and body and soul shall be united to live for ever. He may be one of the careless, quite unprepared; but when the messenger arrests him, he must go with him, and that in a moment. Perhaps he

may be a moralist, trusting to his own goodness; he may fortify himself with arguments taken from Seneca; but these will furnish him with no armour, proof against the guilt of sin, or the sting of death. He may seek aid from philosophy, falsely so called; but its votaries professing themselves to be wise, in the hour of death found that they were fools. Every human help has failed, when most wanted. "But blessed is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God: who made heaven and earth, and all that therein is; who keepeth his promise for ever." Here is the Christian's never-failing support. God, even his covenant God, has promised to be with him, and to be his Saviour in death. God Jesus, almighty to keep his promise for ever, is his one hope, living and dying: and he is his gain, both in life and death. If he has won Christ, he has lived to a blessed time, and, whenever he dies, Christ will make death his friend, and will reconcile him to his going to the Lord, which is best of all. To look upon death as an enemy, to fear it, as if it could take from us any thing worth keeping, or as if it did not put us into the eternal possession of every thing worth enjoying; these are views of the resurrection of Jesus, very dishonourable to his victories, and very injurious to our interest in him. He undertook to conquer death for us, as our surety. He has done it. He has swallowed up death in victory. He has made it our friend and our benefactor: for he has engaged to support us in our last moments. He never did, he never can, fail any who put their trust in him. Experience has confirmed his faithfulness in all ages. His soldiers, whom he made valiant in fight, a goodly company whom no one can number, have triumphed gloriously—before death—in death—and after death.

Before death he prepared them to meet it in faith: for the great design of his gospel is to arm them against the guilt of sin and the terrors of death. And they are good soldiers of Christ Jesus who put on this armour, who have learned their exercise, and who by their daily battles keep their arms shining and bright: Looking to Jesus, the Captain of their salvation, for orders, for courage, for strength, for victory, all opposition falls before them. He enables them to fight the good fight of faith, and the more they conquer sin, the less they have to fear from death; for Christ is to them the whole armour of God, and the pieces of this armour are the graces of his Spirit. For with these the apostle says, in Ephesians, chap. vi., that Christ has perfectly equipped the armies of the Lord. They have the truth of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the peace of God in Christ, faith in Christ, the word of Christ, hope in Christ, and prayer to Christ for fresh supplies of his Spirit, that he would enable them to make such a use of their armour, that they might get the victory over sin and death, and he might get all the praise. In this holy war He is every thing to them, and they find in him, and receive out of his fulness, whatever they want for the peace of their conscience, and for the happiness of their hearts. Sin is pardoned. Death is conquered. They experience the power of his resurrection, and, being passed from death unto life, they have believing views of their own dissolution. We read of their deliverance from the fear of death, and we have examples of those who were more afraid of sin than of death, yea, who chose to go into a burning fiery furnace rather than offend their God: hear how they triumphed—"Our God is able to deliver us; but if he does not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Hear the witness of another Christian hero, how he was enabled to look upon death—"The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." This was a great victory; but the case is not singular: in the same faith died the noble army of martyrs, of whom we read—"That they overcame the accuser of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death." And to this day, the Holy Spirit witnesses to the same truth, and seals it upon the conscience of believers in the hour of death. I call one evidence, a great dignitary in our church, a man of great learning, and never suspected of enthusiasm: being near his death, he thus expressed himself—"I cannot plead innocency of life, especially of my youth;

but I am to be judged by a merciful God, who is not willing to see what I have done amiss; and though of myself I have nothing to present to him but sins and misery, yet I know he looks not upon me now as I am of myself, but as I am in my Saviour, and hath given me, even at this time, some testimonies by his Holy Spirit, that I am of the number of his elect: I am therefore full of joy, and shall die in peace."

Thus the precious Jesus was in the prospect of death more desirable than life itself. So he was to them in dying. All these died in faith. They were his witnesses, that he kept every thing hurtful from them, and brought them in triumph to the end of their lives. That great company round his throne, who are crowned conquerors, testify for him that he did not leave them nor forsake them one moment. He kept his word with them; he smoothed their bed in their sickness; he was tender over them, and wiped away all tears from their eyes. When fainting, he gave them strong consolation; when he called them to meet death in all its terrors, to suffer in flames of fire, to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, to be tormented in every way that malice could invent, or the power of tyrants could inflict, he was with them—their Saviour and their God—the tender care of his heart, and the mighty power of his arm, were never more felt than when most wanted. He kept his peace ruling in their consciences always and by all means, and gave them to feel that bodily pain could not lessen his love to them, nor abate or stop their love to him. I might bring a cloud of witnesses to prove the compassion of Jesus to his redeemed in their dying hours; but let these two suffice: Dr. Thomas Goodwin was upon his death-bed, when his friend Mr. Collins came to visit him, and to pray with him; to whom he said, "He rejoiced that he was dying, and going to have a full and uninterrupted communion with God."

"I am going," said he, "to the Three Persons, with whom I have had communion: they have taken me; I did not take them. I shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye: all my lusts and corruptions I shall be rid of, which could not be here."

After mentioning those great examples of faith, Hebrews, chap. xi., he said, "All these died in faith: I could not have imagined I should ever have such a measure of faith as I have in this hour. My bow abides in strength. Is Christ divided? No. I have the whole of his righteousness. I am found in him, not in my own righteousness, which is of the law, but in the righteousness which is of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, who loved me and gave himself for me: Christ cannot love me better than he does, and I think I cannot love Christ better than I do: I am swallowed up in God."

The historian remarks, That with this assurance of faith and fulness of joy, his soul left this world, and went to see and to enjoy the reality of that blessed state of glory, of which, in a discourse on that subject, he had given a very lively description.

I may be permitted to call another witness to this blessed truth; a believer, who, just before his death, addressed himself to his friends in these words—"My brethren, is not this very amazing to you. When I contemplate the holiness of God, I cannot but cry out that I myself am vile, most vile: and then, when I consider the justice of God, could any one imagine but that I should be struck with most dreadful apprehensions of approaching judgment and deserved wrath? Instead of that, I am under no fear of the latter, and much desire the former. I long to appear before this holy, just God; I have a righteousness to plead that is perfect. The holy Jesus is my security: and I cannot be disappointed: in Christ the justice of God is as much my security as his mercy; here is a holiness that transcends that of all the angelic host. There is no charging my Redeemer with possible folly: Oh, I know I am pardoned for the sake of Jesus Christ, my only Lord and mediator; I am sure of it: I am fully, freely pardoned: I shall soon be thoroughly sanctified and fitted for glory: Oh, I want words to express my gratitude, to tell my joy: adored be God, my Lord, my Saviour: this is the work of God alone: Oh unfathomable love! infinite condescension! unmerited, unbounded grace to a vile offender! I deserve hell; I enjoy heaven."

Oh thou that readest this honourable mention of the love of Jesus to his dying

followers, may it be given thee to find him near to thee in that time of need! If thy faith be in him, doubt not. Take courage, and live up to thy privileges. Regard his promise. Observe his faithfulness to it. Depend upon his arm. Trust in him and be not afraid. Since he has overcome death, why shouldst thou fear that it will overcome thee? Is not his victory thine? Whatever thou feelest in thyself, if nature shrink, and thou hast many uneasy thoughts about thy dissolution, remember that all thy salvation is in, and from him, and he has made thee a free gift of salvation, and of all the things which accompany salvation—he undertook it all—he has finished it all—he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself—he has conquered death. It is now a vanquished foe. In his hand it is the royal way to the kingdom—the only way. Trust him, he will not suffer it to hurt thee. Trust in him, and thou wilt find there is nothing in it that ought to frighten thee. Breath may be failing thee; but Jesus will not fail thee. He has pronounced them blessed; he will infallibly make them blessed, who die in the Lord. Only believe, and thou wilt experience that he has dying consolations for his dying friends. They live in death. He makes them blessed in dying; yea, sometimes to encourage the faith of others, and to recommend his own grace, he has vouchsafed to give them, at the time of their death, a foretaste of the glory which was just going to be revealed. In this faith they leave the world, casting all their care for time and for eternity, for body and soul, upon him who careth for them. Jesus, into thy hand I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth. I believe in the resurrection of the body: thou hast promised it, and I hope it shall be done unto me according to thy word. Christ is the first-frûits, and afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming, when he will bring the joyful harvest with him; therefore into his faithful hands I commit my body. I take my leave of it in faith. It is not possible that the grave should hold me in any more than it could him: and I not only hope to be raised from the grave, but I shall be brought out of it in triumph, on that day of wonders, when Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour, shall change this my vile body, and shall make it like unto his own most glorious body. Oh what a change! Oh what a miracle! This very body, which is now sinful dust, shall be like the Son of God, who is the standard of all perfection—even this body of mine shall be conformed to his most glorious body; although it be now a house, so infected with the leprosy of sin, that it must be taken down; yet, out of its ruins will the Lord raise it a monument to his eternal praise, even a habitation of God by his Spirit. Come, then, thou blessed of the Lord, Oh welcome, welcome death! Thou art the smiling messenger from my Jesus, bringing with thee glad tidings of great joy—of a salvation secured from all possible evil, and the enjoyment of all possible good. In sure and certain hope of this complete and eternal salvation, I resign my body into thy hands, thou Lord of life, and giver of glory—I intrust it with thee to be kept against that day, when all that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this prospect, for believing views of it, for the earnest, and for some little foretaste of it, to the Eternal Three be eternal praise. *Amen.*

Such are the hopes of a real Christian, which he is warranted, which he is commanded, to entertain in the hour of death, which God in his infinite grace actually favours his people with, to the strengthening of their faith, and to the silencing of unbelievers. Never did he display his faithfulness more signally than in our times. Many instances might be given, but I select one, who thus expressed himself to his friends surrounding his death-bed.

"My soul is abundantly comforted and refreshed: my body is dying, but my mind is still vigorous and alive: I feel the cold hand of death is actually upon me; and you may feel it too, if you touch my feet and legs; they are once more clay. Blessed be God, death is no king of terrors to me. He is a welcome messenger, because sent by my heavenly Father. Here I am, O Lord, waiting thy pleasure; ready to obey the summons: thy will, O Lord, be done. Blessed be God, that the attack is made below: my head is as yet very clear and untouched, and, till my heart feels the damp, I hope to be engaged in work suitable to a death-bed: it is not to me a bed of languishing or wasting: this poor remainder of a body is hardly capable of any greater decay till it moulders in the grave; and

there let it moulder. Who would not part with it as it is? It is now my burden, my bar to happiness, and hindrance to a lively spiritual communion with God. But, O my friends! it is united to Christ, and shall therefore one day become a glorious body. This corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be for ever with the Lord." Thanks be to God for such a witness—may my latter end be like his.

CHAPTER X.

The character of the persons who have most reason to triumph in Christ.

They are such as know most of themselves, and have seen the deepest into the mystery of iniquity. The Holy Spirit has convinced them of sin —of original sin, the fountain from which all the streams flow of actual sin, in thought, word, and deed. In this conviction he has put life and power: it is far more than a moral persuasion—he makes it practical and abiding: for the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus quickens the dead sinner, and making him free from the law of sin, and of death, gives him the faith of God's elect: and by the daily use and exercise of that faith makes him more sensible of his obligations to Jesus. In every act of faith he leads the believer out of self to the Saviour—humbles him that he may exalt Christ—empties himself of self, that he may fill him with the good things of Christ—casts down, and keeps down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. In his hand, and by his blessings, this work prospers. The loftiness of man is humbled, and the haughtiness of man is bowed down, and Jehovah alone is exalted in that day—according to the oracle of truth—"He shall glorify me"—which is the office of the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ, and to glorify Christ, by taking of the things of Christ, and by putting the believer into the possession of them.

In this school of humility every view that can be taken of self is abasing: and as the lesson becomes more and better experienced, sin more discovered in its exceeding wickedness, and more felt in its exceeding great danger, the believer is enabled to rejoice more in Christ Jesus, as he has less confidence in the flesh; and when he attains to the highest of his triumph, which he can have in Christ in this world, he is then the lowest in his own eyes—

When he looks back and surveys what he was by nature and practice—

When he considers what he is now, although he be renewed by grace—

And when he looks forward to what he hopes to be at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ—

Every thing in the scripture doctrine, and every thing in scripture experience, leads him to conclude—Behold, I am vile, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes: so that whenever he is tempted to glory, he has nothing left him to glory in but the Lord: self always abased, that Christ alone may be exalted.

When he looks back to what he was by nature and practice, the more he knows, he will be the more deeply humbled for what he was when under the law and under sin, and for what he still feels of a body of sin and of death. He was the creature of God's power, made out of nothing—distinguished by his being in the image of God, and by being capable of communion with him in all the graces and blessings of his love. He was under the best law that could be given him for promoting God's glory and his own happiness. He was bound to perfect and continual obedience to it, and was left to his own will and power, that he should not offend in any one point: but upon his transgression he became liable to suffer the threatened pains and penalties of the broken law. Every right view of himself in this state ought to humble and to abase the sinner; and it effectually does when the conviction is from God. He then finds that his nature was earthly, sensual, and, having not the Spirit, it was alienated from the life of God. All his thoughts and actions were not only irregular, but also contrary to the holy law. His very imagination was evil, only evil, and that

continually. His understanding was not only ignorant of spiritual things, but was darkness itself. His will was a rebel. His affections apostate, ever at enmity with God. Misery and destruction were in his ways: of the way of peace he had no knowledge, neither was there any fear of God before his eyes: for although death and hell were threatened, and were ready to give him the just wages of his iniquity, yet he was quite careless and secure. Like the atheists of old, when warned of their approaching destruction by the prophet—"Let us eat and drink," say they, "for to-morrow we die."

This true knowledge of the exceeding evil of sin and the right humiliation for it, come by believing, and are the genuine fruits and effects of it. Legal conviction has guilt and bondage in it, and worketh sorrow unto death. But the conviction of the Holy Spirit reveals the remedy along with the disease, and produces such a repentance as is not to be repented of—turning from sin to Christ—teaching us practically and daily what we are in ourselves, and how much we want such an almighty Saviour to teach us how to trust in him as our great high-priest, and to live happy and holy under his government, which is perfect freedom. Every act of this faith is humbling. The believer is made to feel his need of that in himself which he is commanded to trust in Christ for. And the more he is enabled to depend upon Christ, he will certainly have the less in himself. And when his whole dependence is as it ought to be, fixed upon Christ, he will come to the apostle's experience, even so to rejoice in Christ Jesus, as to put no confidence in the flesh. Herein consists the triumph of the Christian. In every step of his walk and warfare he is led from self to Christ—kept humbled in his own eyes, that he may exalt the Saviour—emptied of self, that he may live upon the fulness of Jesus, and may thereby be taught to rest his heart in him at all times, and for all things.

With respect to sin, which is his daily burden, under which he is always sorrowing, yet in Christ he can always rejoice. The more he knows of the exceeding wickedness of sin, the more precious is Jesus, and the more he does value the blood of the Lamb of God, which cleanseth from all sin. In his conscience purged from guilt, he can triumph with exceeding great joy, that there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus: for where sin abounded, grace does much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. His grateful acknowledgments are such as these:—

"I was even as others once—by nature a child of wrath, and an heir of misery—I was going on in the broad way of destruction—careless and secure—and I am quite astonished to see the danger that I was in—I tremble to behold the precipice which I was ready to fall over when Jesus opened mine eyes, and by the light of his word and Spirit, showed me my guilt and my danger, and put it into my heart to flee from the wrath to come. Oh, what a most merciful escape! I cannot think of it without adoring the compassionate Saviour, who remembered me in my low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever: and hath redeemed me from the hand of all mine enemies; for his mercy endureth for ever. Not unto me, not unto me in the least, but to the superabounding grace of my God be all the glory. That the Father would make me an object of his choice and love—that Jesus Immanuel would humble himself to be manifest in the flesh, and be obedient unto death, for me and for my salvation—that the Holy Ghost would give me a new birth into the spiritual world, and would quicken me into union with Jesus, and to the enjoyment of the Father's love in him,—adored for ever and ever be the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity. That such a filthy sinner should be cleansed from all sin—that such an ungodly creature should be freely justified by grace—that such a miserable sinner should be blessed with all spiritual blessings—that such a weak creature should be strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man, and when weakest in myself, then to be strongest in the Lord—Oh what riches! What unsearchable riches of grace are these! Abide with me, O thou Spirit of the Father and the Son, and keep me constantly dependent on the fresh supplies of thy divine influence. By thy daily teaching keep open to me the depth and mystery of iniquity, the exceeding wickedness of sin—of my sin, that by thy holy inspiration I may live more by faith, and

nothing may be suffered to hinder my growing fellowship with the Father, and the Son, until I am admitted to full and eternal fellowship. *Amen.*

Thus reflecting with self-abhorrence upon what he was by nature, when he was under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of the law, alive to sin, but dead to God—He is led to consider,

What he is now, although he be renewed by grace, a believer and a man in Christ: how he feels himself, after much and sound experience of his title to salvation, and of his enjoyment of the things which accompany salvation. Every day, and in every thing, he has fresh matter for the deepest humiliation. He finds that he is still a man in Adam—still he carries about him a sinful nature, an old man as well as a new, a body of sin with all its members: he has spirit, but he has also flesh; and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, nothing but corruption, as that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The old man has flesh still, with all its appetites and lusts: the new man is by the Spirit of life, that is in Christ Jesus, alive to God. In the same person sin dwelleth, as we read, "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. And the new man liveth, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The apostle in Romans, chap. vii. not only confesses that he had nature and grace in him at the same time, but also describes it at full length. Indwelling sin was his continual grief, and his heavy burden: an apostle in Christ; and yet he felt the plague of his own heart: and it was his daily cross, which he was forced to bear—and his constant enemy, against which he was always at war—no peace, no truce could be made. The flesh was ever lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two with such unceasing opposition, night and day, that he could not do the things that he would, either so continually or so perfectly. He describes this battle as it was carried on in his own experience, the two combatants striving in him for mastery. He was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and as well instructed and armed as ever any believer was for this warfare; having on the whole armour of God, and yet wearied with this daily conflict, he is forced to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He had no deliverance in or from himself; it was against himself that he fought, and of himself he was led to despair. But, looking to Jesus, he takes courage, assuring himself of a complete victory, and of an everlasting triumph in the Captain of his salvation—I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, (this is the conclusion of the whole matter) so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

This is still the experience of every true believer, at all times, and upon all occasions: he has a practical comment upon the seventh chapter of the Romans in his own bosom: he has heartfelt experience of the warfare between the flesh and the spirit: he finds it hard fighting; harder, because it is continual—it will never cease so long as flesh is flesh; that is, so long as the believer lives in the body and in the present world. Indwelling sin never rests—it is like the troubled sea, always casting up its filthy motions, and then the most troublesome when he would be the freest from them. Oh what humbling lessons doth he learn in all his approaches to God! he knows his privileges, and he wishes to live up to them; but he cannot. When he would draw near to God in the prayer of faith, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. On his bended knees desiring to confess his sins, and to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, imploring pardon through the redemption that is in the blood of the Lamb, and expecting it freely, as the most sovereign mercy that a poor sinner can receive. Alas! alas! even then shame and confusion cover his face. He desires to keep his thoughts from wandering; he would have his whole heart engaged in the duty; but he cannot: his imagination is not to be restrained. When he would be uniting all his affections in fervent and effectual prayer, vain, foolish thoughts force themselves upon him: he drives them away as Abraham did the birds which came down upon the sacrifice; but they will return. He mourns, as well he may, for these distractions of his mind, and is deeply convinced that a most holy God might justly condemn him for his very best

devotions. He is therefore led to put them into the hands of the Mediator, that he may perfume them with much of his incense for their acceptance; and through his intercession, and through that only, he may obtain an answer of grace.

Neither can he trust in his praises any more than in his prayers. Let him praise ever so much, and ever so well, yet he can make no suitable acknowledgments for the blessing of creation. Once he was nothing: for his being at all—for such a being, rather than any other—for being made a man, and at first highly favoured with the image and friendship of God—who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or show forth all his praise for the miracle of creation? But who can conceive how great, how endless, are the blessings of the new creation? For they are all gifts of God's grace—distinguishing and sovereign—given to sinners as sinners—to the chief of sinners—continued to the unworthy—increased to the unthankful—how great in their nature!—how invaluable the sum of them! The believer, deeply impressed with these sentiments, acknowledges that he is less than the least of all God's mercies; yea, he is sensible that he deserves the heaviest of the divine vengeance: so that his prayer, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* lays the foundation of his very best praises. He who has most forgiven will love most. He who feels what he really is among the chief of sinners, will be among the chief of those worshippers who ascribe all their salvation to God and the Lamb. The humblest amongst them will feel that they have most reason to be thankful: but still their praises are no payment. They must receive fresh grace to praise with, and more grace to praise better. The debt increases by the addition of fresh gifts of grace, and leaves the believer nothing to glory in but the Lord—to be saved—to feel it—to enjoy it by faith—to be made and to be kept thankful, giving all the glory where it is due: these are among the mercies which endure for ever.

In this school of self-abasement he is taught to be humbled for his short attainments in the scriptures, read, or preached, or meditated on. How seldom does he attend the word, as that congregation did!—"Behold we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." This preparation of heart was from the Lord. He disposed Cornelius and his family to receive the word aright, and his blessing came upon them in hearing it: for while Peter was speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And it would be so still, if there were the same dependence on his grace, and the prayer of faith for his teaching along with the word. How little is this depended upon under hearing, although the profit be entirely from him! how seldom is the mixing faith with it received and acknowledged! therefore the memory keeps little impression of the word, and in heart it is not fruitful as it ought to be. On all these accounts the believer mourns and is humbled before God. He feels it to be true, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not." He is sensible of these failings and distractions, even when he labours to be most free from them. He is going to the Lord's table to be fed and feasted, hoping that he is one with Christ, and Christ is one with him. He would gladly partake of the fruits and blessings of this union by communion with Christ, by receiving the bread of life, and the cup of salvation, according to Christ's holy institution. He comes in faith to eat the flesh of Christ, and to drink his blood, in grateful remembrance of him—according as he hath been taught: the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for me, preserve my body and soul unto eternal life.—I take and I eat this bread, and I take and I drink this cup, in remembrance that Christ died for me; and I desire to feed on him in my heart by faith with thanksgiving. In this service he would have his whole soul engaged, that nothing might interrupt his communion with his Beloved. But vain thoughts, which lodge within him, will break out. They intrude, although most unwelcome guests, into this banquet of love: so that he is constrained to cry out, Lord Jesus, pardon the failings of my holy things! I come to the throne of thy grace, that I may obtain mercy, and may find more grace to help me in every time of need.

When he is led to consider what is the cause of all these failings, oh what an

abiding lesson of humility has he to learn! He sees that they all spring from the bitter root of unbelief, and are the fruits of remaining corruption, which can only be kept down and conquered as the strength of Christ, apprehended by faith, prevails over them. Self, pride, legality, nurse them: they have their being, their activity, their power, from those fleshly lusts which war against the soul, and render the whole life of the believer one continued act of self-denial. He has still a body of sin, with all its members, mixing with every duty, so that he cannot ground his faith and hope upon the best of them. The work of Jesus upon earth, the intercession of Jesus in heaven, are the sole ground of his confidence towards God. His motive is good; he aims at pleasing God in all things; he would do his will, and suffer his will, as it is his bounden duty, with faith and patience. His end is good: he would gladly keep the glory of God in his eye, and direct all he does to it, as his elder brethren do in heaven; but he cannot. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Yet he is not so discouraged as to give over and cease his approaches to God, because of his infirmities. Having obtained help of God, he fights on the good fight of faith. He does not leave off praying because he is not so spiritual as he desires to be; but he is rather more earnest and fervent. The Spirit, helping his infirmities, keeps him in a humble dependence upon Jesus, waiting on him for a due sense of his wants, for the acceptance of his prayers, for a supply of them, for pardoning the failings of them, for more faith in them, and for enabling him to continue instant in prayer, according to the divine command, that men ought always to pray and not to faint; which supposes them to be kept in a praying frame, and to use the means which Saint Jude recommends for the obtaining of these blessings: "But, ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

As he is not weary of his prayers, because they are not so spiritual as he could wish, so neither is he weary of his praises, although they fall far short of what such a Saviour deserves, and of what he would acknowledge with all possible gratitude: because he falls short, he aims higher. He feels himself under infinite obligations to the Father for his love, to the Son for his salvation, and by the supply of the Spirit's grace he is made sensible that he is not only less than the least of divine mercies, but, if he had his just deserts, he should have judgment without mercy. This lays the foundation for his highest praises. The faithful witness for Jesus makes the believer willing to be beholden to him for every mercy; yea, to glory in being a pensioner upon his fulness: from which he receives grace for grace, that in all things he may be giving of thanks; according to the Lord's favour to his people, informing them to take with them words, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips," which is the sacrifice of the New Testament worshippers, who through Jesus the Mediator offer the sacrifice of praise continually; that is, the fruit of their lips, giving thanks to his name, wishing, praying to do it with some of the praises of heaven, as one said, "I will hope continually, and I will yet praise thee more and more."

As these prayers and praises are grounded upon faith in the divine promises, this makes the believer a diligent reader of the scriptures. He does not neglect his Bible, because he has not yet attained the perfect knowledge of every part of it. For that very reason he studies it more; he prays more over it, grows more thankful for the divine power which still accompanies it, and studies and prays that he may experience more of this power: it has been the means of making him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. He finds it also to be the food of this faith—it nourishes him, and he grows thereby. He hears, reads, meditates, and keeps on praying to the Holy Ghost to write the scriptures upon his heart, and to make his life a fair copy of them. And what he thus learns preserves him in a settled dependence upon the faithfulness of God to his word and promise. And he is not disappointed: he finds all the scripture which was given by the inspiration of God is still profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man

of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This blessing he has in his Bible. The more he can mix faith with it, the more precious it becomes. His Bible is his library. The study therein makes him wise for eternity; which is the superlative excellency of Bible knowledge, of which Jesus thus speaks: "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors; for whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord."

Thus in the use of means he is kept humble and dependent, exercising the true gospel poverty of spirit in self-abasement; and so far from being stopped, he rather glories and triumphs in his infirmities. The opposition which they give helps him forward; they are always driving him out of self to Christ, teaching him the necessity of the supplies of the Spirit, making him more diligent, and keeping him more humble in the use of the means; and thus he learns to live more by faith upon Christ, and to seek more close communion with him and his fulness, especially at his table. He does not absent himself from it, because he has not the fellowship there, so close, intimate, and abiding, as he could wish, or because, the last time he was there, he was not so lively as he used to be, or because he was unworthy, and full of complaints. He has tasted that the Lord is gracious: and this taste has increased his hunger and thirst; the food which he wants he does not carry with him, but he goes to receive it. When he hears his Lord's command—Take, eat this bread—drink this cup—Do ye this in remembrance of me—he obeys, believing the promise: This is my body given for you: this is my blood shed for you. The more faith in the promise, there will be the more appetite and the more nourishment received from the spiritual food; for then the Holy Spirit puts his influence into the elements, and the communicant eats the flesh of Christ indeed, and drinks his blood indeed, having by faith communion with him in the bread and wine. At this table the believer is fed, nourished, and feasted with the bread that cometh down from heaven, even angel's food; for he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever; according to the Lord's own promise, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." The believer has this in his eye, both in what the banquet is now, and in what it is the pledge and earnest of, when it shall be realized. Faith gives a substance to the things promised and hoped for. It has the earnest and the pledge of them: as certainly as we have the one, so certainly shall we have the other. A faithful God gives us this security—Whoso is one by faith with Jesus shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb: whoso eateth and drinketh at his table here in faith, shall infallibly eat and drink with him at his table in his kingdom of glory. The sure and certain hope of this makes our present feast at the Lord's supper a happy foretaste of that eternal banquet, when he will vouchsafe to admit us to the honours of his table, and of his kingdom. Oh, blessed, most blessed time! The prospect is animating; it brightens the darkest day of affliction, refreshes the spirits under the heaviest trials, and is a rich cordial under the deepest feeling of indwelling sin. Where Christ is, all is blessed. Union with him is heaven begun; and this the believer is called to enjoy; even to enjoy communion with him in all he is and has: Christ is one with him: Christ will not leave him nor forsake him: nothing is able to separate the members from the Head. He who has begun the good work has given the fullest security that he will not leave it unfinished. He will carry it on unto the end; for he is faithful who hath promised. And the apostle applies the words spoken to Joshua, and says that they were spoken also to us, that we might trust and not be afraid: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid: neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest." And he went out strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He fought the Lord's battles, and prospered until the whole land was subdued before him. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. Even so shall it be to the whole Israel

of God. Every good soldier of Christ Jesus shall be kept safe by his almighty power, and under his banner shall fight the good fight of faith, until he attain the promised inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. He has taken possession of it in their name, as their surety ; and not one of them can perish; for he keeps the inheritance for them, and them for it; yea, the day is hastening on, when he will present all his redeemed unto the Father : " Of those whom thou hast given me have I lost none. Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me."

On all these accounts it is evident that a believer every day, and in every thing, finds matter for the deepest humiliation. He has still a body of sin, remaining corruptions, daily infirmities, and short comings. All that he has of his own abases him in his own eyes; so that his triumph is never in himself. His salvation, with all its graces and blessings, depends entirely upon what he is in Christ. On this foundation he may rest safely always, notwithstanding he has nothing of his own to glory in. Most of his mistakes and miseries come from his seeking to be independent of Christ—hoping to find that in himself, or in the world, which is only in Christ. Self-love is unwilling to be beholden to Christ for every good thing: it is always trying to put some confidence in the flesh: but the believer is commanded, and is taught to deny self—to put it upon the cross—and to crucify it daily with its affections and lusts. As Christ is exalted, self goes down. As Christ is beloved, self is not only denied, but is also abhorred. The prophet Ezekiel, in the thirty-sixth chapter, describes the very height of the experience of a great believer, who is blest with the abundant graces of the Holy Spirit: the result of which is—" Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations: not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you ; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." Such is the genuine working of true grace —it lays the sinner low at the Saviour's feet, abased and humbled to the dust— Behold I am vile—I abhor myself, and I repent in dust and ashes. The sense of God's distinguishing and sovereign mercy brings all high thoughts of self into subjection to Christ Jesus, and teaches the believer to walk humbly with his God, ascribing all his salvation to the praise of the glory of the exceeding riches of God's grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus; that, according as it is written, " He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

Thus it is evident that when the believer looks back upon what he was by nature, or considers what he is now by grace, he has nothing of his own to boast of; yet even in this continual warfare between the flesh and the spirit, in Christ Jesus he may rejoice even to a triumph, a jubilee of joy. But the grand triumph is yet to come. The best glorying in the Lord here is only a prelude to it. Now we have the espousals with our heavenly bridegroom; but then the marriage will be consummated. Now we are kept waiting in hope for the crown of righteousness ; but that will be our coronation day. What a day will it be! What wonders and miracles! The promises, exceeding great and exceeding precious, will then have their full and everlasting accomplishment by a faithful God, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them who have believed—when they shall see him face to face—shall be with him where he is—shall be like him, and made capable of enjoying the honours, and riches, and pleasures of his kingdom, in their fulness of blessedness for evermore.

CHAPTER XI.

The eternal triumph.

This is the great lesson which the believer is learning, till he comes to the end of his faith—what is promised him, and what he hopes to be at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the centre to which all his experience

tends: and, while he keeps it in view, it so enlivens and animates his prospect, that, come what may, he goes on his way rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." And by his holy inspiration he opens the eyes of the understanding, both to understand what is revealed, and also to know the things that are freely given to us of God: for, great as they are, endless as they are, the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned: but he that is spiritual has spiritual senses given him to exercise upon spiritual things—he is made certain of their reality—his faith gives a substance to the things hoped for, and evidence to the things not seen—a hope that never maketh ashamed—an evidence very clear and satisfying. Sometimes he can triumph in hope of the glory of God, when the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in his heart the Father's love, and bestows great joy and peace in believing. But he who is thus taught of God knows only in part. An apostle knew no more. The best of our present enjoyment is only a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. But even this little is of such a nature, and has such efficacy, that, when it is truly believed, it influences the whole man, while he looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. They are not seen by the eye of the body, but are visible by the eye of faith; so we read, "Come, taste and see how gracious the Lord is." By this eye of faith Moses saw him that is invisible: and this sight so affected him, and had such an influence upon his heart and life, that he lived above the world with all its temptations. This is the victory that overcame the world; even his faith. The same sight still works the same effect —producing a real value for spiritual and eternal things, and forming the heart to love and to practise the apostle's rule—My conversation is in heaven, from whence also I look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

In the scripture view of our victory in Christ there are two great points, which will take in all that is revealed of our eternal triumph; namely, the complete conquest of all our enemies—and the full and eternal enjoyment of all possible good. These two truths come now under our consideration; and if we can meditate upon them under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and mix faith with his revelation, we shall have a good warrant to begin those praises, which will never end, and to sing in harmony with all the redeemed our everlasting jubilee.

When we come to the end of our faith, even the eternal salvation of our souls, our victory is described to be a perfect deliverance from all evil—from sin, from suffering. Sin has brought all pain into the world—miseries upon the body—miseries upon the soul—spiritual wickedness—numerous hosts of foes—mighty principalities and powers: it has armed thousands, yea millions of them for our destruction—made us our own enemies by enslaving us to divers lusts and passions, making us the prey to earthly, sensual, devilish tempers—and, as if there was not suffering enough in the world, filling us with many imaginary fears, which occasion real suffering. At last comes the wages of sin—death with its terrors—hell with its torments. Oh what a deliverer! what a deliverance! Not one enemy left. They are all brought under, and subdued, to rise no more. The Captain of our salvation has vanquished them for us. His victory is the earnest of ours. His was complete; so is ours. No sin, no suffering can come near the habitation of his holiness. Indeed, he suffered once for sin; but he put it away by that sacrifice of himself. By faith we have the benefit of his suffering—a conscience purged from guilt—no condemnation left—no charge from any enemy. God himself justifies, God himself sees us, accepts us, glorifies us, in and with his Son; for in that day he will present us to his Father without spot of sin unto eternal salvation.

Of this blessed and complete victory over all sin, and all suffering, the prophet Isaiah had a delightful prospect; speaking of it in these words: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and shall come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and

sighing shall flee away." Oh give thanks unto the Lord Jehovah; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy: they have as much to thank their Redeemer for as any creature possibly can have: his ransomed were under sin, helpless, miserable, dying sinners: from this slavery he bought them with an inestimable price, and they are become his property, his peculiar people, who have through him liberty to return to God, and to serve him without fear on earth, and to bless him for giving them freedom to come to Zion, to the city of the living God, with songs of gratitude and praise: they have everlasting joy upon their heads—crowned conquerors; they have the joys of heaven, and the gladness of eternity in their hearts, which exclude all pain, and all sorrow: no fear can enter there—not one sigh. The Lord himself is their portion; and they shall reign with him for ever and ever.

The beloved John was favoured with a view of the same eternal conquest which the ransomed of the Lord shall have over all thei renemies, and he speaks of it thus: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more curse, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away; and he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new." This is Jesus, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, who reigneth the Lord God omnipotent for this very purpose, that this scripture may be fulfilled to the uttermost, and to eternity. He was the word made flesh, who tabernacled amongst us, being that most holy temple which God pitched, and not man: out of whose fulness believers receive all grace, and all glory: the compassions of Jesus are like himself, infinite and endless. He loves his redeemed too well to let either sin or sorrow come near them. They might have been holy mourners in their pilgrimage, when they went through the valley of Baca; but now he has wiped away their tears, all tears from their eyes. The curse that caused them he has removed. That death, the wages of which they deserved, he has changed into life. The pillars in his house, which are to get out no more, are thereby delivered from sorrow and crying, and from every pain: all the former things are passed away—sin is no more—pain is no more. Into the kingdom of Jesus nothing of the old man is suffered to enter; for he creates all things new. The Lord from heaven makes all his people like himself, conformed to his own image in righteousness and true holiness. A more perfect victory cannot be imagined than to have enemies so vanquished,—all enemies,—that they shall never have entrance into the kingdom of God, and his Christ. When believers shall come to the end of their faith, they shall not only be thus saved from all possible evil, but who can conceive what their actual enjoyments will then be? To be saved from all sin, from all the effects of sin, is a great mercy; yet it is only a part of our salvation. But, looking at the world lying in wickedness, beholding the variety of pains and miseries in it, from which no one is exempt—no state of life free from them—the palace as full of them as the cottage—kingdoms convulsed—infidelity spreading its poisonous influence, and attempting to destroy all good order and government—old age bringing its infirmities, and death hastening—it is certainly a great deliverance that none of those evils can approach us any more. Blessed be God the Saviour for this great mercy. It is through his grace that his kingdom of glory will be kept in perfect peace: no evil, no fear of evil, shall for one moment interrupt the happiness of his subjects. But what is this compared to the actual enjoyment of all possible good? Who is able to declare fully what this will be at the appearing of Jesus the great God? We must wait for the full manifestation of the sons of God: but yet there is a great deal revealed, which belongs to us and to our children: and if we can read it in faith, with prayer, and with a continual dependence upon the teaching and application of the Holy Spirit, he will give us to form our hearts and lives upon the certainty of what he has revealed: for our conversation will then be in heaven, and we shall have both the knowledge and also the experience

of heavenly things, growing according to our faith. The word revelation signifies taking off the veil or covering from any thing, that it may be seen clearly: in the scripture sense, it is removing the veil from heavenly things, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, creating spiritual senses to exercise upon those heavenly things; of which the natural man can have no just ideas; for he cannot understand nor receive the things that are freely given to us of God: but he that is taught of God has evidence given him of the reality and of the blessedness of those things which are revealed, and by faith enjoyed. When such a one reads what God said to Abraham: "After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." He reads it for himself; he makes the promise his own, and trusts in it as steadfastly as if God had spoken it to him by a voice from heaven; for so is he warranted to apply it by the apostle. Now, it was not written for his sake alone, but for us also; no scripture being of any private interpretation. The gift of grace to Abraham was nothing short of an infinite good; for it was God himself: I will be thy God. What is meant by this relation has been largely treated of in the former volumes. It is only needful to add, that it denotes the relation in which the Holy Trinity stand to believers, and the covenant engagements to them. God is theirs—He is their Father; the Son is their Saviour; the Spirit of life has enabled them to receive the Son: and they are one with him. He dwelling in their hearts by faith, and through him they are one with his Father: as the Lord said in his prayer—"Neither pray I for these alone—the apostles—but for them also who shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." This prayer was for all the chosen of the Father, given to the Son, redeemed by him, and in due time quickened by the Spirit, and brought into the same covenant relation, and partakers of the same covenant blessings, as Abraham was. What was promised to him, was promised to all that walk in the steps of his faith,—the whole family and household of faith. It is as if God had said, Fear not, believer: I myself, Jehovah in Trinity, will be your present salvation to shield you from all sins and enemies, and I myself will be your exceeding great reward. Who can tell what the believer shall then be, when this promise shall be fulfilled, when he shall be brought as near to the Godhead as a creature can possibly be, joined to the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit, an habitation of God through the Spirit, and through Jesus unto the Father, and in this holy and blessed communion, finding an eternal heaven of happiness, an exceeding great reward? when it is received in this its fulness, it is a reward, but of grace—a gift of sovereign mercy—great—something worthy of the great God—like himself—exceeding great, eternally great. O Holy Ghost, keep the hope of it lively: Oh make it every day more lively, till, through thy blessing, I come to know it as it is.

The Psalmist, speaking of this happiness, suits his description to our present method of understanding spiritual things as they are imagined to us by material. The pleasures of our senses are made use of to give us ideas of that happiness which is to be found in God: for it is all in him; he is heaven. The enjoyment of him in glory is the heaven of heavens. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I wake with thy likeness; for thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." All this, great and endless as it is, belongs to them who have God for their God: for when they are admitted into his presence, they shall be made like him—Oh marvellous change!—capable of enjoying him, so as to be quite satisfied—finding in him a fulness of joy—pleasures divinely great, abundant,—a river of pleasures—yea, a fountain of pleasures springing up into everlasting life. Every sense shall be gratified to the uttermost, and that for evermore. Blessed be God for this unspeakable gift! and has he not herein vouchsafed us matter of triumph? May not the believer, ought he not, to rejoice with exceeding great joy, who has this prospect before him? Who that is out of heaven can have more reason than he has? Survey it, O my soul! take a narrow review of it. Examine over and over again the Psalmist's description

of it, and see what can be added to make it absolutely perfect. If nothing can, if it be as full as God can make it, may my heart grow in holy desires after the glory that is to be revealed, and triumph in the God of my salvation.

Our Lord gives us the same description in these words, speaking to his apostles: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me (in the surest, fullest manner that it can be conveyed), that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The king of this holy land is Immanuel—God Jesus: he is the King of kings, the Lord creator of all worlds, and the government of them all is upon his shoulders, and the names of his redeemed are written upon his heart. For them he has made abundant provision, that they may feast with him at his table, and may be receiving out of his fulness every grace that can make them completely and eternally blessed: for they shall sit down with him upon his throne, and shall share with him in all his royalties, blessing and adoring him in their everlasting songs of triumph. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever *Amen*." The apostle John calls upon us NOW to begin the heavenly song: and he would have us to do it with the sweetest melody in our hearts, praising our sovereign Lord, who has taken our nature into union with himself, in order that by his Spirit we might be joined to him our glorified Head, and might by faith partake of his holy and heavenly nature. No words can describe more fully the dignity to which, by virtue of this union, we shall be exalted: nay, it is not to be conceived at present how great it will be. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is: and every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." Oh what a dignity is this! what upon earth is to be compared for one moment to it?—Sons of God—Sons of Adam, who have borne the image of the earthly, advanced to bear the image of the heavenly! This is a glory which surpasseth all understanding. It did not yet appear as it is to the beloved John; he knew as much of it as perhaps ever man did; but it was far greater than his knowledge. He knew it but in part: he was indeed sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession; but the earnest is not the inheritance itself. It is only a pledge and a security, that, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour, we shall be put into full possession. At present we have it in the promise of the God of truth: and faith in its promise begets a hope that will never make us ashamed; because it will keep us patiently waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, when we shall come to the eternal enjoyment of all the riches, and pleasures, and honours of our sonship with Christ our glorified Head.

The apostle would lead us also to consider the fountain from whence all this blessedness springs—from the Father—what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. The love expressed by this name, Father, has no parallel. It had no beginning, and it will have no ending. It is from everlasting to everlasting—bringing with it out of its infinite ocean all the streams of grace which make glad the city of God, and never stopping till it return with all the happy objects of his love to the same great ocean again. The apostle would have us to behold and to admire the miracles of the Father's love, which he purposed and wrought out, and bestowed upon us, who are sinners even as others, and yet to the everlasting praise and glory of his grace—chosen—called—effectually brought into the family and household of faith by the Spirit of adoption, and ennobled—sons of God. What an exaltation! What a blessedness! Made the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ—with him who is Lord of all—admitted to share with him in his kingdom, his crown, his glories; according to his own prayer—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, may be with

me, may be like me." Oh what an animating view is here for the highest rejoicing of faith and hope! Christ, by taking our nature into union with himself, has advanced it into the greatest dignity of which it is capable; for it is heaven to be with him, where he is in his glory; like him, conformed to that standard of all perfection in body and soul, perfectly and eternally. What a hope should this beget and cherish! even a hope full of glory and immortality; especially as all this honour is according to the Father's covenant purposes; for whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren: moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say to these things? Can there be greater grace shown from the God of all grace? Can there be higher honour conferred, than to be so exalted from the depth of sin and misery, as to be raised to the honours of sonship, even to a conformity to the Son of God? Oh what sentiments had that blessed man of it, when he said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake after thy likeness; for thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore!" Conformity to Jesus brings with it this fulness of joy; and the hope of it is an active and a lively grace: for every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as Christ is pure. This is the mark at which the believer aims: he wishes to be like Christ, and to be more like him: he would feel more of the power of the cross of Christ to crucify in him the body of sin, and more of the power of the risen Jesus, that there may be a real growth into him; and that in all things: thus he purifies his heart and life by that faith in Jesus, of which the apostle thus speaks: "Brethren, I have not yet attained what I am striving for; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

These are some of the scripture authorities, from which this conclusion may be fairly drawn, that a believer, whatever view he may take of himself, either from what he was, when dead in trespasses and sins, or from what he now is, quickened by the Spirit of Christ, and living by faith, yet crying out under a sense of his corruptions, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me? yet he may thank God through Jesus Christ his Lord; for he is warranted, he is commanded, to rejoice in the Lord always, and to triumph in the God of his salvation. And he has enough given him in hand to exercise that strong faith, which will administer strong consolation, even great, very great joy and peace in believing: for the word of God cannot be broken; his promises cannot fail; his covenant engagements are immutable, given as infallible security to the believer, that his faith may not stagger at any difficulty, but, looking to a faithful God, he may go on his way rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

These are some of the blessed effects of looking to Jesus, and living by faith upon him and his fulness. In this way there is continual matter of triumph. Let the believer look back on what he was by nature, or on what he is now in his renewed state by grace, or looking forward to the glory that is to be revealed at the appearing of his Saviour, when he shall be with him in the kingdom which cannot be moved, and shall be like him, all his members conformed to their most glorious Head, and partaking of his divine riches, and honours, and pleasures. What upon earth can exceed such a prospect! What can administer greater happiness than to have the evidence of it kept clear and open? What can make life more comfortable, and the end of our faith more desirable, than such great and blessed things, promised and given most freely in time, yea, in the fullest manner that almighty love can bestow them in eternity?

For such mercies, bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

O thou beginning and ending, the first and the last, the author and the finisher of the faith, Jehovah Jesus! I have been looking up to thee for thy divine teaching, and I am still looking up to thee for thy divine blessing on this my offering. It is a poor mite, which I would cast into thy treasury, as my dying testimony

for the truth and for the power of thy gospel. Be pleased to accept it out of thine infinite condescension. Thou knowest the heart of thy servant: whatever is right in it is thine own, the work of thine own grace. Failings there are, and they are mine: of thy mercy pardon them; and make use of this little treatise, as it shall seem best to thy godly wisdom, for the increase of faith in thy church, and for the advancement of thine own fame and glory; that more honour may be put upon thy word, more dependence exercised upon thy faithfulness, and there may be a growing conformity to it in the hearts and lives of thy people. Be pleased, merciful Saviour, to accompany the reading of it with thy Spirit for these purposes, and I shall be amply rewarded. May thy grace, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. *Amen.*

A PRACTICAL COMMENT

ON THE

HUNDRED AND SEVENTH PSALM.

PREFACE.

The following comment was not drawn up with any view to its publication. It was only intended for the pulpit, at the Thursday's lecture in St. Dunstan's, and after it had been preached would have been thrown aside; for the author is obliged to make a sermon every week, besides the lecture; and he had no thoughts of sending such hasty compositions to the press. He knows that they want every qualification necessary to make them admired in this polite age: their manner is unfashionably plain and simple; they have nothing studied or brilliant in their style, nor delicately nice in the method; no pretty turns of wit, nor striking antitheses to entertain the reader. And the matter is as opposite to the established taste as the manner of them. They are not in the least indebted to the boasted light of nature; they borrow no ornaments from the celebrated religion of nature; nor do they receive any aids from the moral scheme; but they are the plain honest truths of scripture, of the Christian church, and of the church of England. And yet these great authorities are not sufficient to protect them from contempt, nor excuse the author from the charge of novelty. He is very sensible of it. He has been long enough acquainted with the received opinions of the age; and he cannot expect any kind of applause (and he thanks God he does not desire it) from the present set of great and learned men. If you are doing right, you will certainly be censured; and if you resolve to do right, you must learn to neglect censure. I have been prevailed on to neglect it by the earnest and daily repeated importunity of the hearers of these lectures, by whom I was determined to make them public. They are here laid before the world, as they were preached, without any alteration; and if it please God to make them the instruments of doing some service to the souls of mankind, my loss of reputation as an author will be fully repaid. If but one single person should find reason to bless God for these lectures, I shall not lose my end; although I hope they will be useful to many. And I pray the almighty God and Saviour of the world to send them out in his grace and strength, and to accompany them abundantly with his divine power, and then his glory will be the more displayed, if any mighty effects should be produced by such weak instruments.

Every minister of the gospel who has any zeal for his master's honour, or love for the souls of men, ought to exert himself in these days of reproach and blasphemy; for we are sunk into the very dregs of the latter times, in which it was foretold that iniquity should abound. And does it not now abound? has not his majesty (King George the Second) complained more than once from the throne of its abounding? Has not the convocation, at last (in the year 1755), seen it, and publicly confessed the abounding of iniquity? and is it not obvious to every unprejudiced spectator that our people, high and low, are totally corrupt, not only in morals, but also in principles? For it is too evident a truth to be denied, that we are departed from the doctrines of the reformation, and yet we keep up our subscriptions to the articles and homilies then established, which are entirely founded upon the certainty of the fall of mankind in Adam, and of

their recovery in Jesus Christ. We were wholly ruined by the one, and we are wholly saved by the other. The sin of the one was imputed to us, as the righteousness of the other is imputed to us. All the scripture is built upon these two truths, as well as the church of England. But no sooner does a clergyman venture to speak out upon these points, than he is immediately branded with the name of enthusiast, although he has declared, in the most solemn manner before God, his assent and consent to every thing contained in the articles and homilies upon the fall and redemption of mankind, and although the very persons who abuse him have done the same. Urge the plainest passages of scripture, appeal to your subscription, call upon reason, and summon matter of fact to bear testimony to the soberness of your faith, yet you cannot avoid a hard name. If you think of avoiding it because you do not deserve it, you will find yourself mistaken. I made the same mistake, and fancied myself quite safe, while I had the scripture, and the church on my side, until I found that a strong suspicion had gone out among some ministerial clergy, as if I was leaning a little matter, and inclining, as it were, something towards enthusiasm. And they suspected this because I did not lean and incline towards them or their doctrines and practices; which most certainly I did not. Instead of defending the Jew-bill, and the marriage-bill, I rather insisted upon the total corruption of mankind by the fall, and the freeness and fulness of redemption through Jesus Christ, and the necessity of the grace of the Holy Spirit, to change and renew our corrupt hearts, in order to dispose them to receive the benefits of Christ's redemption, and to enable them to live a holy and a Christian life. These doctrines are now dressed up by our great men in a bear-skin, and baited under the odious nick-name of enthusiasm; and our people begin to join the cry, and to fancy that a man must be a little tinctured with enthusiasm, before he will make himself so ridiculous as to defend these exploded doctrines. But if others fear a nick-name from this quarter, I do not. The ministerial clergy are welcome to call me what they please. I honour their reproach; for I find myself in the best of company by leaving theirs. The whole church of God, in the Old Testament and the New, believed and acted upon the truth of the doctrines before mentioned. All the primitive fathers embraced them. The martyrs died, and sealed the belief of them with their blood. The protestant church has with one voice maintained them. And the church of England has made the acknowledgment of them absolutely necessary for every one of her ministers, and therefore, if it be enthusiasm to acknowledge what she has made necessary, then the church of England is turned enthusiast, and her best sons are the strongest enthusiasts. And what then are we to think of those court divines who expose their brethren and ridicule them under the disgraceful name of Enthusiasts, for no other reason but because we make a conscience of our oaths and subscriptions, and dare not risk our eternal salvation for any present honour or preferment.

The generality of readers may not, perhaps, be acquainted with the true state of the case, and therefore it may be useful to them to show upon what footing these doctrines stand, which are now exploded under the odious name of enthusiasm. I will carry my inquiry no higher up than the reformation of the church of England, and will endeavour to convince the reader that if we are enthusiasts for abiding by the doctrines of the reformation, then these persons must be something much worse, who have subscribed to those doctrines, and yet have departed from them.

The fall of mankind in Adam, their corruption, their forfeiture through and in him, are now openly denied. But hear what our church says upon these points. In the office for public baptism, we have these words, "Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost." Mind, we are conceived in sin, and then born in sin, and it is necessary to be born anew of the Holy Spirit. The ninth article explains the matter thus:—

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from

original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to spirit."

The homilies are full of the same doctrine. The second part of the sermon on the misery of man has these words: "Thus we have heard, how evil we be of ourselves, who of ourselves, and by ourselves, we have no goodness, help, or salvation, but contrariwise, sin, damnation, and death everlasting; which, if we deeply weigh and consider, we shall the better understand the great mercy of God, and how our salvation cometh only by Christ: for in ourselves (as of ourselves) we find nothing whereby we may be delivered from this miserable captivity into the which we are cast through the envy of the devil, by breaking God's commandment in our first parent Adam. We are all become unclean; but we all are not able to cleanse ourselves, nor make one another of us clean. We are by nature the children of God's wrath; but we are not able to make ourselves the children and inheritors of God's glory. We are sheep that run astray; but we cannot of our own power come again to the sheepfold, so great s our imperfection and weakness."

These words want no comment: they describe our natural corruption by the fall in such clear and express terms, that all the art of sophistry cannot explain them away. I will confirm their testimony by two bishops of our church, that by the mouth of two witnesses the truth may be established. Bishop Wilkins, on Prayer, has these words:—

"All the pravity and baseness which fills up every part and power about us, are but diffusions of our original corruptions. What a world of mischief is there in our several parts—our wills, affections, our tongues, eyes! and yet all these are but as little rivulets; the fountain, or rather the sea, that feeds them, is our corrupt nature."

Bishop Beveridge shall be my other authority. The title of the fourth article of his Private Thoughts is this:—

"I believe that I was conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity; and that, ever since, I have been continually conceiving mischief and bringing forth vanity."

"This article of my faith I must of necessity believe, whether I will or no; for if I could not believe it to be true, I should therefore have the more cause to believe it to be so; because, unless my heart was naturally very sinful and corrupt, it would be impossible for me not to believe that which I have so much cause continually to bewail; or, if I do not bewail it, I have still the more cause to believe it, and therefore am so much the more persuaded of it by how much the less I find myself affected with it: for, certainly, I must be a hard-hearted wretch indeed, steeped in sin, and fraught with corruption to the highest, if I know myself so oft to have incensed the wrath of the most high God against me, as I do, and yet not be sensible of my natural corruption, nor acknowledge myself to be by nature a child of wrath, as well as others. For I verily believe that the want of such a due sense of myself argues as much original corruption as murder and whoredom do actual pollution: and I shall ever suspect those to be the most under the power of that corruption that labour most, by arguments, to divest it of its power.

"And therefore, for my own part, I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to go about to confute that, by wilful arguments, which I find so true by woful experience. If there be not a bitter root in my heart, whence proceeds so much bitter fruit in my life and conversation? Alas! I can neither set my head nor heart about any thing, but I still show myself to be the sinful offspring of sinful parents, by being the sinful parent of a sinful offspring; nay, I do not only betray the inbred venom of my heart, by poisoning my common actions, but even my most religious performances also with sin. I cannot pray, but I sin; I cannot hear, or preach a sermon, but I sin; I cannot give an alms, or receive the sacrament, but I sin; nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are still aggravations of them; my repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again with the blood of my Redeemer. Thus, not only the worst of my sins, but even the best of my duties, speak me a child of Adam. Inso-

much, that whensoever I reflect upon my past actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception to this very moment, to be but as one continued act of sin.

"And whence can such a continued stream of corruption flow from, but from the corrupt cistern of my heart? And whence can that corrupt cistern of my heart be filled, but from the corrupt fountain of my nature? Cease, therefore, O my soul, to gainsay the power of original sin within thee, and labour now to subdue it under thee. But why do I speak of my subduing this sin myself? Surely this would be both an argument of it and an addition to it. It is to thee, O my God, who art both the searcher and cleanser of hearts, that I desire to make my moan: it is to thee I cry out in the bitterness of my soul. Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Who shall? Oh! who can do it but thyself? Arise thou, therefore, O my God, and show thyself as infinitely merciful in the pardoning, as thou art infinitely powerful in the purging away my sins."

These words so clearly describe the great truth which I have endeavoured to establish in the following lectures, that I could not avoid citing them at full length. And now, if the reader will sum up the evidence, and impartially review what our articles, and homilies, and our bishops have taught concerning the corrupt fallen state of mankind, he will certainly acquit us of the charge of enthusiasm, who say nothing more than they have said, and who are obliged by our subscriptions to say all that they have said.

The second doctrine of Christianity, which is now ridiculed under the name of enthusiasm, is the free and full redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ, by whom we are justified from all the sinfulness and miseries of the fall.

The thirteenth article absolutely excludes every work of ours from having any hand in justifying us, and states the case thus: "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive, or, as the school authors say, deserve grace of congruity; yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

The title of the second homily is this: "A sermon on the salvation of mankind by ONLY Christ our Saviour from sin and death everlasting." This homily is divided into three parts: the last begins with these words: "It hath been manifestly declared unto you, that no man can fulfil the law of God; and therefore by the law all men are condemned; whereupon it followeth necessarily that some other thing should be required for our salvation than the law; and that is a true and lively faith in Christ bringing forth good works, and a life according to God's commandments. And also you heard the ancient fathers' minds of this saying—faith in Christ only justifieth man—so plainly declared, that you see that the very true meaning of this proposition or saying—we be justified by faith in Christ only—(according to the meaning of the old ancient authors) is this: we put our faith in Christ, that we be justified by him only, that we be justified by God's free mercy, and the merits of our Saviour Christ only, and by no virtue or good works of our own, that is in us, or that we can be able to have, or to do, for to deserve the same. Christ himself only being the cause meritorious thereof."

Bishop Reynolds has explained the doctrine in the same manner in the folio edition of his works, printed 1658, p. 251.

"Justification that is by faith is of mere grace and favour; no way of work or merit: for the act whereby faith justifies is an act of humility, and self-dereliction, and holy despair of any thing in ourselves, and a going to Christ, a receiving, a looking towards him, and his all-sufficiency; so that, as Mary said of herself, so we may say of faith—the Lord hath respect unto the lowliness of his grace—which is so far from looking inward for matter of justification, that itself, as it is a work of the heart, *το credere*, doth not justify, but only as it is an apprehension or taking hold of Christ. For as the hand in the very receiving of a thing must needs first make itself empty, (if it be full before, it must let all that

go ere it can take hold on any other thing,) so faith, being a receiving of Christ, John i. 12, must needs suppose an emptiness in the soul before."

My good Bishop Beveridge is of the same opinion. In the eighth article of his Private Thoughts he has these words:—

"It is a matter of admiration to me, how any one that pretends to the use of his reason can imagine that he shall be accepted before God for what comes from himself: for how is it possible that I should be justified by good works when I can do no good works at all before I be justified? My works cannot be accepted as good until my person be so; nor can my person be accepted by God till first engrafted into Christ; before which engrafting into the true vine it is impossible I should bring forth good fruit; for the plowing of the wicked is sin, says Solomon, Prov. xxi. 4. Yea, the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, chap. xv. 8, and if both the civil and spiritual actions of the wicked be sin, which of all their actions shall have the honour to justify them before God? I know not how it is with others: but, for my own part, I do not remember, neither do I believe, that I ever prayed in all my lifetime with that reverence, or heard with that attention, or received the sacrament with that faith, or did any other work whatsoever with that pure heart and single eye, as I ought to have done. Insomuch, that I look upon all my righteousnesses but as filthy rags; and it is in the robes only of the righteousness of the Son of God that I dare appear before the majesty of heaven."

I leave the reader to make his own remarks upon these authorities; for if he should deny the truth of the doctrine which they maintain, yet he cannot possibly deny that they do maintain it; and therefore, if we are enthusiasts for insisting upon the free and full redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ, by whom we are justified from all the miseries of the fall, then our articles and homilies, and the most pious and learned of our bishops, have not only led the way into this enthusiasm, but have also compelled us to walk in it; and therefore the hard name should fall upon them, and not upon us.

There is another doctrine which is mightily ridiculed at present; and that is, the necessity of the grace of the Holy Spirit to change and renew our corrupt nature in order to dispose us to receive the benefits of Christ's redemption, and to enable us to live a holy and a Christian life. This is at present the very touchstone of enthusiasm. If you seem but to favour this opinion, you are immediately suspected of being a little brainsick; and the moment you speak out, you are supposed to be fit for Bedlam. And grave, sober moralists, nay, large, solemn divines, give you over for a ruined man; and your very friends begin to be afraid that you will lose your usefulness. This treatment is unaccountable, and I believe will appear so to the candid reader, if he will but impartially consider the tenth article of our church:—

"The condition of man after the fall is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith, and calling upon God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will and working with us when we have that good will."

The first part of the homily for Whitsunday has these words:—

"It is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God, such as otherwise, of their own crooked and perverse nature, they should never have. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; as who should say, Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if he have any at all in him, they proceed only of the Holy Ghost, who is the ONLY worker of our sanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus."

To the same effect, Bishop Reynolds, in his Sinfulness of Sin, p. 140:—

"Look into your hearts, and you shall find a very hell of uncleanness, full of deep and unsearchable deceit and wickedness, full of hardness: no sins, no judgments, no mercies, no allurements, no hopes, no fears, no promises, no instruc-

tions, able to startle, to awaken, to melt or shape it to a better image, without the immediate omnipotency of that God which melts the mountains, and turns stones into sons of Abraham."

In the same strain, Bishop Beveridge, whom I admire so much, because he was as great an enthusiast as myself, says :—

Resolution III.

" I am resolved, that as I am not able to think or do any thing that is good, without the influence of the divine grace; so I will not pretend to merit any favour from God, upon account of any thing I do for his glory and service.

" And indeed I may very well put this resolution among the rest; for should I resolve to perform my resolutions by mine own strength, I might as well resolve never to perform them at all: for truth itself, and mine own woful experience, hath convinced me that I am not able of myself so much as to think a good thought: and how then shall I be able, of myself, to resolve upon rules of holiness, according to the word of God, or to order my conversation according to these resolutions, without the concurrence of the divine grace."

If the reader will weigh these authorities carefully and impartially, I am very certain that he will acquit me of the charge of enthusiasm; for upon their evidence every minister of the church of England is bound to believe that all men fell in Adam, and that free and full redemption is offered to all men in Jesus Christ, by whose good Spirit our fallen nature is to be restored, and we may have grace and power to live a holy and a Christian life. This is my faith. In this I hope to live and die. And if our court brethren reckon me an enthusiast for embracing it, are they not dissenters for rejecting it? For do they not dissent from the articles and homilies of their own church, and from their own subscriptions? And an enthusiast, dress him up in ever so ridiculous a light, is a more amiable character than a dissenter of this stamp, who sets his hand to one thing and his heart to another, who subscribes to what he does not believe, and who has most solemnly engaged before God to build up those very doctrines which he is trying to preach down. An enthusiast, with all his mistakes, may be an honest man; but such persons are—what shall I call them? Surely not honest men. Reader, give them their proper name. Suppose the church of England had forced us to subscribe to enthusiastic doctrines, and we were enthusiasts enough to believe them; certainly we are less blameable than these persons who do not believe them, and yet do subscribe to them, rather than not be candidates for the high honours and revenues of the church. If they despise me, I shall not envy them. Let me be poor with a good conscience, and let them be rich. Let me be a despised enthusiast, and let them be highly honoured. May God make me thankful for what I hope for in the other world, and let them enjoy as much as they can get in this!

And now, reader, let me ask thee one plain question; and I beg of thee to answer it impartially. After what has been said, dost thou really take me to be an enthusiast? If thou dost, only consider that what thou callest enthusiasm in me is the doctrine of scripture, and of the articles and homilies of the church of England, and of her soundest bishops and ministers in her better days. But if thou givest me this hard name, because my brethren do not preach up the same doctrines which I do, how is that my fault? If they pay no regard to their subscriptions, why shouldst thou load me with reproach for their crime? If they dissent from the church, is that any reason why thou shouldst dissent from it, or why thou shouldst think the worse of me for not dissenting? But if thou wilt, nevertheless, call me an enthusiast, without any reason, nay against all reason, then I will learn to bear it. And may God forgive thee, as I do, from my heart; but I pray thee read no farther; stop here; throw the book into the fire; and it will save thee a good deal of vexation; and when thou art more open to conviction, perhaps I may lay something before thee that may be of service. In the mean time farewell!

But, reader, if thou dost not take me to be an enthusiast, I thank thee for thy good opinion. Peruse the following lectures, and compare them with the

doctrines of scripture and of the reformation, and I doubt not but thou wilt be fully convinced of the antiquity and soundness of what is here advanced. Only let me give thee a friendly caution against being misled by a set of infidel writers, who pretend to give characters of books which they never read, in a thing called The Monthly Review, in which I have seen every sound doctrine of Christianity ridiculed and blasphemed, and every damnable heresy openly defended and maintained. I expect no favour from these men. I desire none. To be spoken of well by them would be indeed reproach; their abuses will do me service: and they may load me with enthusiasm; I will carry it patiently, and would suffer any infamy or torment upon earth rather than be answerable for their horrid blasphemies against Jehovah and his Christ. And I hope, reader, that the evidence which I have laid before thee will prevail against the scandal of these monthly reviewers. If thou art as indifferent about what they say of me as I am, it will not move thee at all; but thou wilt think the better of me, the more I am abused by them. And whenever thou seest an author degraded and vilified by them, if thou wilt take my advice, buy the book; depend upon it there is something very excellent in it; and I dare promise thou wilt never be disappointed.

I have nothing more, kind reader, to offer thee at present, but to commend thee to the grace and blessing of almighty God, who will, I hope, accompany thee in the reading of these lectures, and render them the means of making thee more thankful to Jesus Christ. And if thou dost indeed receive any benefit from them, give him all the glory. I expect no reward but to be remembered in thy prayers. And if thou wilt always mention me in thy addresses to the throne of grace, then I shall be bound to pray for thee. And may God hear us both, and enrich thee and me with all his graces and blessings in heavenly things, through Jesus Christ.

A PRACTICAL COMMENT

ON THE

HUNDRED AND SEVENTH PSALM.

SERMON I.

PSALM cvii. 1, 2, 3.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

THE book of Psalms is a treasury of divine knowledge. It contains a complete collection of sacred hymns, which were composed in praise of the blessed Jesus, whose miraculous birth, whose life and actions, sufferings and death, resurrection and ascension, and investiture and supreme power on the throne of glory—his gathering the church out of all lands, and protecting it to the end of the world against its enemies, and then putting it in possession of eternal glory—are the subjects here treated of: and they are the most noble and elevated subjects in themselves, and, besides, they are the most interesting to every believer: every part of them is full of wonder and miracle, which deserve his greater attention and esteem, because each of them was done for his salvation. And the author, who undertook to write upon these subjects has not fallen below their dignity: he has recommended them to us by all the graces of language and the sublimity of sentiment. His poetry is worthy of himself, and rises up to the merits of

that adorable person whom it celebrates: for it came from heaven. The Psalms were not the composition of King David, or the flights of his poetical imagination; he was only the scribe, who copied them from the dictates of the all-wise Spirit: they are indeed the inspiration of the Almighty, whose the matter is, and from whom the words themselves proceeded. And if any persons doubt of it, let them take any one description of nature out of the Psalms and compare it with what the best heathen authors have said on the same subject, and they will see reason enough to be abashed and confounded at the abject poverty of the human genius, when put in competition with the infinite perfection of the inspired volume. And how should it be otherwise? The heathens had no such subject, nor no such inspirer. They were ignorant of the person and excellencies of the great Deliverer of mankind; and how then could they sing his praises? Or if they had known of him, yet they had no infinitely wise author, no eternal Spirit, to dictate to them: their highest poetry was but the work of men, and of very ignorant men too: but this collection of hymns was indeed the work of God: and, coming from him, it is as much superior to any human composition, as the infinite Author is superior to his creatures. On this account it deserves our greatest esteem and veneration; and we cannot value it too much, since we have here a richer treasury of heavenly knowledge than is any where else to be met with. And may we look upon it in this light, and treat it accordingly. May it be our continual study and delight until we enter into the spirit of these divine hymns, and reap all the instruction and profit from them, which God intended they should be the means of administering to his church!

And I hope the same Spirit who recorded this particular hymn which I purpose to explain in the course of these lectures will be graciously pleased to accompany us in the explanation of it, and to give us his blessing. He left it upon record, as a lesson of gratitude, to inspire us with thanksgiving and praise to our blessed Saviour; and we always want to be stirred up to the practice of this duty. Our hearts are strangely averse to it; they are by nature unholy and unthankful; and, whatever we may talk of our fancied moral rectitude, and how pleasing a thing it is to be grateful to one another, yet, with respect to God, we are not, nor is it pleasing to us to endeavour to be, grateful: for we are always, every moment of our lives, receiving mercies from God; but how few moments do we spend in making proper acknowledgments for them! And they who endeavour the most to be sincerely thankful, yet often find their affections cold and languid, and want fresh motives to warm and inflame them: and even they, who have the greatest knowledge of the abundant mercies of God their Creator and Redeemer, and have a grateful sense of them, yet freely confess that they are not so grateful as they could wish; and it grieves them to find that they do not love God in so perfect a degree as they ought to love him: and therefore the subject of this Psalm will be useful to us all: we all stand in need of every assistance which can help us to render proper thanksgiving and praise to our sovereign Lord and Saviour. And the Holy Spirit here offers us his assistance: he left us this hymn to be the means of inspiring us with grateful hearts, and he will doubtless accompany his own means with his own grace. May he help us to meditate upon it with devout and humble tempers, that He, who is now in the midst of us, and from whom no secrets are hid, may dispose us to make a right use of his sacred word, and may pour down his grace plentifully upon us, filling our souls with praise and gratitude to the God of our salvation.

Before I enter upon the distinct consideration of the several parts of the Psalm, I judge it will be useful to lay before you a general plan of the whole, that you may afterwards more readily follow me when I come to particulars. And this shall be my present subject. Upon the first reading of the Psalm, every believer will observe the principal scope and design of it, which are contained under these four points:—

First, We are called upon to be thankful for redemption, in the three first verses.

Secondly, From the 4th verse to the 33rd, the reasons for our thankfulness are assigned, which are taken from God's redeeming us from the lowest state of sin and misery. And,

Thirdly, From his manner of protecting us after we are redeemed and brought into his church, from the 34th to the 42nd verse. And,

Fourthly, In the two last verses, we have the application, exhorting us to study and to understand those mercies of redemption, that we may be full of thanksgiving and praise for them.

This is the general plan. The Author is the Holy Spirit. The subject is thanksgiving to Christ the Redeemer. The motives here urged, to incite us to practise this duty, are taken from the many great and inestimable blessings of redemption. In order to give us clear and just ideas of this redemption, the Holy Spirit has selected four images from nature to represent the exquisite distress and misery of man in his natural state: they are the most striking images which he who knows our hearts could set before us, and they are so highly finished that they want no grace or ornament which infinite wisdom itself was able to give them. He compares us, while we lay in our natural fallen state, first, to men who have lost their way in a desolate wilderness and are ready to perish with hunger; secondly, to men, who are fallen into the pit of darkness and the shadow of death, where they lay bound in misery and iron; thirdly, to men who have such a weak and vitiated appetite, that they loathe even the smell of wholesome meat; and fourthly, to men who in the utmost distress at sea in a violent storm. These four images, put together, make a complete picture of our miserable fallen condition; and the persons who are in this condition are supposed in the Psalm to be brought to a deep sense of its misery; they feel their own guilt, and dread its punishment; conscience is awakened and alarmed; and the smart and anguish of it grow insupportable. This seems very afflicting; but it is the work of God. He makes them feel their misery, that the sense of it may force them to seek relief where only it is to be found; for no sooner do they send up their petitions to the throne of grace, than the almighty Saviour instantly sends them deliverance, as it is remarked in each of these four instances, that when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, then he delivered them out of their distress. He was disposed to grant them help long before they were willing to receive it. And such was his redeeming love, so abundant were the riches of his mercy to those distressed objects, that he not only delivered them, but also bestowed upon them every manner of thing that is good. Although he had freely lifted them up from the lowest state of sin and misery, yet he never once upbraided them with their former wretchedness, never withheld his loving-kindness, nor stopped the current of his favours; but pardoned them, and justified them, and still went on sanctifying them, until he placed the crown of eternal glory upon their heads. Oh! what a love was this! What infinite mercy was it to take these miserable sinners from the vilest sink of corruption, and to exalt them to be the most glorious saints in heaven! Does not this call aloud for your gratitude? Is not this the highest instance of God's redeeming mercy—of that very mercy which is said to be over all his works? for it is to us sinners, above them all in degree, and beyond them all in duration. And how then can we refrain from that just tribute of praise which the Holy Spirit calls upon us, under each of these four instances, to pay to our great Deliverer. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men! After these four instances of man's exquisite distress and misery by nature, and of his full and perfect recovery by grace, the Psalmist goes on to describe the flourishing state of the Gentile church, when the Jewish should be cast off and rejected. And this part of the Psalm is like the preceding, elevated and sublime. From the 32nd to the 39th verse, the Christian church is represented under the image of a well-watered country, where the face of nature is all verdant and blooming; where the earth produces its grain, the trees their fruit in great abundance; where you see plenty smiling around you, and peace securing the possession, and grace giving a relish to the enjoyment of this happy scene. God thus turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and the dry ground into water-springs; and there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may sow the field, and plant vineyards, which may yield them fruits of increase: he blesseth them also, &c. Such is the Gentile church;

but the Jewish, now cast off and rejected, is compared to a desolate wilderness, where there is neither standing water nor water-springs, where you see nothing growing, not the least verdure appears; there is not one single field sown with grain; not one flourishing tree lifts up its fruitful head; neither the olive nor the vine take root in this barren soil: so that there is neither wine to make glad the heart of man, nor oil to make him of a cheerful countenance. The whole prospect is one dry desolate wilderness.

And this part of the Psalm is fulfilled. The Christian church has been in this flourishing condition, and the Jewish church is now like a sandy wilderness—neither refreshed with the dew of heaven, nor made fertile by the streams of divine grace: and for want of their genial influence it is so parched and burnt up, that nothing grows either for use or ornament.

And the same gracious Governor and Saviour of the world, who rejected the Jews, and cast them into this barren wilderness, because they rejected him, and cast him off from being Lord over them, can and will also humble us in the same manner, if we be guilty of the same crime. The present wretched state of the Jews is a standing lesson to those persons who will not receive Jesus for their God: and may his grace dispose them to make a right use of this lesson, lest it should soon be exemplified in their own destruction! for we of this church and kingdom have much to fear from our national infidelity. Several churches and kingdoms have been destroyed for this crime; and the Holy Spirit, in the 39th and 40th verses of this Psalm, declares that this is the common method of our Lord's providence. Whenever a people, after various calls and admonitions from heaven (and we have had many such lately), still remain incorrigible in their deistical opinions about Christ's divinity, and their treasonable practices against him, then his good spirit no longer strives with them, but gives them over to a reprobate mind. And again, they are diminished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. The Christians are certainly diminished and brought low; they are diminished in number, and brought low in circumstances, insomuch that we have great reason to apprehend our candlestick may be soon removed, and the light of the pure gospel may shine no more among us. Were it not that our God is good, we might expect to be finally cut off: but the mercies of Jesus are infinite: he has borne with us long. Oh that his long-suffering may not be wearied out, but may have the desired effect, and lead us to repentance: so iniquity shall not be our ruin. Blessed Jesus! spare us a little; and let our people have one more offer of thy grace and mercy before the destroying angel be sent to visit us and cut us off.

After this striking account of the various states and revolutions of the church, there follows, in the 41st verse, a most sweet promise to the few poor followers of the Redeemer:—Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction—the poor in spirit he removes out of the reach of affliction—the God, in whom they trust, will protect and keep them safe amidst public calamities. No evil shall come nigh to hurt them. When a nation is visited for their infidelity, and is scourged with the sharp rod of war or pestilence, then the destroying angel shall have no power over them. Their almighty God and Saviour will encamp around them; and then, says the prophet, "Though a host of men were set against me, yet would not my heart be afraid; and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him." He trusted in God's promises; and he had good reason; for he has engaged to be an impregnable wall of brass around his faithful people when they are threatened with persecution or distress: and must not these persons be quite out of the reach of evil, who are surrounded with a brazen wall, and the Almighty himself guards and defends it? And this was his promise to Jeremiah, and, through him, to every believer in the same circumstances, Jer. xv. 20: "And I," says God, "will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord." He will save and deliver his people, and they shall be at peace, while the rest of the world is at war: for he setteth the poor on high, out of the reach of affliction; and then it follows, he maketh him households, like a flock of sheep. No shepherd can watch over his flock with a more tender care, or provide better for their

welfare, than the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls provides for his flock: under his most affectionate and almighty protection, each of them is so completely happy, that he can truly declare, "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing." And having thus experienced the love and care of the chief Shepherd, how can they withhold from him that just tribute of praise and gratitude which he demands?

These are such great and weighty points, and we are so nearly concerned in them, that we ought not to pass them by unnoticed; for our present and eternal salvation depend on our interest in them, and therefore they should be constantly in our thoughts, that, by meditating upon them properly, they may be the means of inspiring us with continual gratitude. And the Holy Spirit recorded them in this Psalm for this very purpose, and every believer applies them to the same end. His redemption—the guilt and misery from which he was redeemed—the free grace of the Redeemer—the great and endless blessings which he purchased for us freely, and which he bestows without money and without price—blessings truly inestimable—in this world the greatest we are capable of receiving—in the next world the highest he has to give, and of the same duration with himself, even infinite and eternal blessings. Who can think on these blessings without thanksgiving? For what must your hearts be if there be any little dirty groveling object upon this earth which engages your thoughts, and fixes your affections, in preference to these infinite and eternal blessings? Oh! what low creatures are we, notwithstanding our boasted dignity, and fancied rectitude! How abjectly base are we, to prefer shadows to substance, and time to eternity! to spend our lives in the concerns of this perishing world, and to have no thought or care about the business of the eternal world! This is so irrational and absurd, and so monstrously wicked, that it is indeed sinking ourselves below the beasts that perish. And although never did more men act this low part than at present, yet was there never more boasting of the dignity of human nature. And, what is the worst of all, our moral rectitude and our other high metaphysical notions are so far from setting us right, that they indispose us to receive the only remedy which can cure us. Where nature fails, what can come in to our aid, but grace?—and the grace of God is now an exploded opinion. To talk of it is mere enthusiasm, and to urge the scriptures, which speak of it, and which maintain its necessity, this is called religious rant and madness: for the metaphysician wants none of the aids of grace to lead him into all truth, nor does the moralist want any assistance from grace to enable him to practise the whole duty of man. And it can be to little purpose to persuade persons under these strong delusions to think seriously about their redemption, and to take a view of their misery without it; for they are prejudiced. They love and cherish the opposite opinions: and to work upon men of these tempers requires some power superior to human. God alone is equal to it. And may he open the eyes of this deluded generation, that they may be disposed to hear the comfortable doctrines delivered in this Psalm, and to receive them in such a manner, that they may see the wonderful mercies of God in redemption, and may, together with the righteous, rejoice and give thanks. And when this great and happy event shall be brought about (may our almighty God and Saviour effect it soon), then it follows, in the 42nd verse, All iniquity shall stop her mouth. The adversary shall be silenced. The enemies of our Lord, seeing his tender care and watchful providence over his people, and finding all their attempts against them unsuccessful, shall hold their peace. They shall be silenced, if not convinced. They shall be confounded at the wonders, which the Lord shall work for the salvation of men, and shall have no power to object, either to the Redeemer or to his redeemed people—all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

Oh! that will be a happy day. When shall we see it? When shall iniquity be struck dumb? We hear it daily in our streets uttering hard speeches against the Lord and against his Christ—against them, although our Lord's divinity be secured by the fundamental laws of this land, yet we have volumes upon volumes published; against them the more polite part of the world retail the daring blasphemies of these volumes; and against them the common people begin to suck in greedily the blasphemies of their superiors. When shall we see an end

of these impieties? O God, let it be soon. Let iniquity soon stop her mouth, and let it never be opened again, to object to those wise and gracious methods by which thou hast decreed to bring many sons unto glory through Jesus Christ.

I am now come to the 43rd verse, where the Holy Spirit calls upon every reader to meditate upon the great subjects treated of in this Psalm, "Whoso is wise will observe these things"—whoever has a true taste and relish for spiritual matters, and is blessed with the true wisdom that is from above, he will observe these things: he will make his remarks upon them with judgment: he will meditate upon them often, study them much, and delight himself in them greatly: and therefore, having this Psalm and the other scriptures for his direction, whereby he may investigate and trace out the ways of providence, it will be the whole bent of his soul to attain this wisdom. And there is no part of the subject which affords more curious, and at the same time more interesting, meditations than the view of the wonders which God hath done for the redemption of man. Every time they are judiciously reviewed, we see fresh matter for adoration and praise. Our hearts grow warm with the sense of them, our affections kindle, and our love to our most blessed Redeemer is inflamed. Whoso is wise will meditate thus to his profit, and he will so observe, so remark, what he hears and reads, as to grow the wiser for hearing, and the better for reading. And would to God every one of us were wise to observe the great points of our redemption! The Holy Spirit calls upon us to remark them; and he declares that we are not wise unless we observe them. Whoso is wise, will observe these things. If this be the only wisdom, oh how few of us are wise indeed!—how very few are wise in the judgment of the Holy Spirit! Most of us are wise enough in other matters, and are deeply read in what does not concern us; but in this great point we are very babes: we have not learned our first rudiments. And certainly we have been too long children in understanding: it is now high time to seek for wisdom; and there is no wisdom worth seeking but that which is here mentioned; *viz.* such wisdom as enables us to understand the wonderful works of God in our redemption, and then disposes us to practise what we understand, and further gives us the power, as well as the will, to live up to it. And does wisdom, true and perfect wisdom like this, grow upon our earth? Hear what a venerable patriarch thought of this matter: "But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living," Job xxviii. 12. This was Job's opinion. If you refuse to subscribe to it, tell us where the true wisdom is to be found. Is it taught in any of the schools of modern philosophy? Can the metaphysician soar high enough to the regions of this wisdom, and bring it down to mortal view? Or can the professors of ethics teach it us among the rules of their morality? Alas! alas! it is far above the reach of their highest attainments even to discover it, and much more to practise it; for the subjects on which it is exercised are the high and deep things of God, of which philosophy can know nothing. The great apostle gives this reason, 1 Cor. ii. 14: "But the natural man (and would to God philosophers were not such!) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And this spiritual discernment is the wisdom that is from above. It is not a learned attainment, but it is the gift of the Holy Spirit; and the proud philosopher so much disdains to seek it from his grace, that he calls it extravagant enthusiasm even to suppose that the Holy Spirit will give it. But if this be enthusiasm, the scripture is full of it. "The Lord," says Solomon, "giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding," Prov. ii. 6; and it is written in the prophets, "And they shall be all taught of God." And again, in the New Testament: "If any of you lack wisdom"—what shall we do?—go and study systems of ethics, and read volumes of morality? No. We must take a method that is now reckoned the highest madness of enthusiasm. "If any of you lack wisdom," says St. James, "let him ask it of God." How strangely this sounds! Ask it of God! What! is he the only giver of this wisdom? He is: for he giveth to all men, who ask it in faith, liberally, and upbraideth not. Let these men, who are wise above what is

written, call it what they please, to ask wisdom of God: yet these promises are clear and full, and the humble Christian rests upon them, and knows them to be infallible; for he has experienced their truth. And may the almighty Spirit so bring down and humble our natural pride, that we may all have this happy experience, and may find the last words of the Psalm verified in ourselves—Whoso is wise will observe these things, and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, *i. e.* they shall know it clearly and fully, and they shall have a lively sense of it upon their hearts: for they had before made their remarks upon it, and had laid together their observations, and had applied them to use, and then the knowledge became experimental. And the original word, as well as the meaning of the passage, justifies this construction; for the verb which we render, and they shall understand, is in the conjugation *hithpael*, which is peculiar to the sacred tongue, and which is used here to denote that they should build themselves up by this understanding; it should produce its proper effects upon themselves, and the end of knowing it should be fully answered. By which means it could not be a matter of mere science or dry speculation, but would produce many great and blessed consequences, enabling them to taste and see that the Lord was merciful, and filling their hearts with thanksgiving and praise for all his mercies.

I have now laid before you the general plan of the whole Psalm. You see, the great subject here treated of is redemption; and the proper disposition of mind with which we are to consider it, is a thankful heart: and the Holy Spirit recorded this sacred hymn to be the means of exciting in us thankfulness. And may his grace and blessing go along with these lectures upon it, and bring them home with such power and evidence to your hearts, that his gracious intentions in recording it may be fully answered! And if it be the sincere desire of your souls—if you indeed wish to find profit from these lectures—then I will only detain you while I give you two or three short exhortations relating to the general plan which I have laid before you.

The first is an exhortation to the reading of the Psalm, which I hope you will frequently do in private. It is an abstract of the whole Bible: for the two great subjects of the Old Testament and the New are man's sin and misery by nature, and his recovery by grace; and these are here clearly, though briefly, discussed. You will therefore greatly profit from reading it, if you remember the four chief parts of what it consists; *viz.*

First, An exhortation to thanksgiving, in the three first verses, for redemption.

Secondly, The reasons for our thanksgiving, from the 4th to the 33rd verse, relating to man's misery before redemption. And,

Thirdly, Reasons relating to Christ's manner of governing the church after it is redeemed, from the 34th to the 42nd verse. And,

Fourthly, The application, exhorting us to study and to understand these mercies of redemption, that our thanksgiving may flow from a grateful heart. The more you read the Psalm in this view, the better you will understand it, and the more reason you will find to admire its excellencies. And,

Secondly, I would not only exhort you to read it much, but also to pray for that humble, teachable temper, which alone can render the reading of it profitable to your souls. It is the word of God; it is the instruction which the all-wise Spirit has provided in order to inspire you with love and thankfulness to your most adorable Saviour. And when he vouchsafes to instruct you, hear with all humility, and learn of him the words of eternal life. Let his will be yours—his commandments your delight. But

Thirdly, Let it be chiefly remembered from whence the blessing of all is to come: for neither can the humble frame of mind, nor the benefit arising from it, be attained by our own abilities. They must both come from one and the same Spirit. God must first teach us the grace of humility, and then enable us to reap profit from it: for he is the giver of every good and spiritual gift. So that whenever you begin to read this or any other portion of scripture, if you desire it should be profitable to your souls, always look up to the Holy Spirit, and desire his gracious assistance. This was the prophet's method: "Lord, open thou

mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." And these wondrous things we may also behold if we read the law of God, as he did, with humility and prayer. And if you desire to see the wonderful wisdom of God in the plan of your redemption, you must use the prophet's words—Lord, open thou mine eyes to see it: for you could no more see this wisdom unless the day-star was arisen and shone bright in your hearts, than you could see those outward objects unless the light of the sun shone in your eyes. And therefore, convinced of this, let so many of us as lack wisdom now ask it of God: and I know of no words more significant and expressive, nor yet more devout and pious, than these of our own church, which I shall apply to the present occasion.

O almighty and eternal Spirit, who hast caused this sacred hymn to be written for our learning, send down thy blessing upon our studies in it; and grant that we may in such wise hear it, read it, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, that, by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

PSALM cvii. 1, 2, 3.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

IN the last lecture I laid before you the general plan of this sacred hymn. The great subject of it is thanksgiving. The motives to induce us to be thankful are taken from the mercies of God. We are bound to bless and praise his holy name for every instance of his goodness, but above all for that inestimable instance of his love, in redeeming us from the lowest state of sin and misery, and then freely bestowing upon us pardon and peace in this world, and eternal life and glory in the next. The Holy Spirit insists chiefly upon this instance, trying to awaken in us some sense of gratitude for these blessings of redemption. His arguments are the most likely to work upon our hearts; and therefore I will endeavour to open and explain them, trusting to his guidance, and hoping for his blessing.

And may he now take all our hearts into his protection, and drive away every vain intruding thought which would either dissipate our attention or distract our affections; and give us, O Holy Spirit, the hearing ear, to know what it is to be thankful, and the understanding heart, to be able to practise it, that, when we finish our present meditations, we may be the better for them, and may be the more disposed to join in praise and thanksgiving to Jesus Christ, our most adorable God and Saviour.

The Holy Spirit has set the blessings of redemption before us in so clear and striking a light, that they who are not affected with the view of them in this Psalm, must be dead to all sense of gratitude. But I would hope there are not many such among you. Every one of you may not, perhaps, be actuated by the most lively and warm sentiments of thanks to your blessed Redeemer; but you have no objection against having your hearts more inflamed with his love: rather, you wish your hearts were more his than they are, and that your affections were placed and fixed upon him with more delight. Come, then, ye who are thus disposed, and hear how many powerful motives the Holy Spirit has used to inspire you with sincere gratitude to the God of your salvation. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." Thus he begins the Psalm, calling upon you to practise the sweet duty of thanksgiving, which arises from our experience of the Redeemer's mercies; and therefore we cannot but receive great delight whenever we so

remember his mercies as to find still stronger motives to bless and praise him for them. And this is what we are called upon to practise in the first words—O give thanks—and the duty may be thus defined: Thanksgiving is a grateful expression of praise, arising from a heart sensible of the mercies of redemption. Because I shall always use the word in this sense, I must desire you to remember that by thanksgiving I mean a grateful expression of praise, &c. It is such a grateful expression of praise as comes from the heart: for no man will praise God until he has some sense and perception of God's mercy; and praise is not a lip-service; it does not consist in uttering a set of thankful words; it is not the praise of the mouth, but of the heart. Religious praise is the service of the affections, and flows from true and hearty love to that object which we praise; for we are always ready enough to praise the thing that we delight in. Whatever is the dear object of our affections, on it we are lavish enough of our praises. The heart will command all the faculties to be where its treasure is—attending upon it with their tribute of praise. And if Jesus the Redeemer be our treasure, then we shall constantly attend upon him with the praises of a grateful heart: but he cannot be our treasure until we desire to have some interest in him; and therefore I add, in the last words of the definition, that the heart must be sensible of the mercies of redemption; for it is certain we cannot be disposed to thank God for mercies of which we have no desire to taste, neither indeed will we thank him, unless we have a lively perception, and are perfectly sensible of his mercies: consequently, our thanksgiving will be according to our sense of them. If we find him bestowing upon us great and numerous and unmerited favours, then our thanks will rise in proportion to what we experience. But still, he who has no sense of God's mercies, can have no motive to offer him any thanks; because thanksgiving is only expressing with the mouth, and the other faculties, what the heart feels; and therefore, if the heart, which is the spring, be not moved, it is impossible the other faculties should have any motion. The Psalmist says, "O praise the Lord: for it is a good thing to sing praises unto our God; yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful." Here he supposes that we must first rejoice in the mercies of God before we can find it a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful for them; because we cannot return him praises with joy for that in which we have found no joy. It is as impossible for us to rejoice in that thing, of which we have not an affectionate sense and perception, as it would be for a dead man to rejoice: and therefore thanksgiving can arise only from a grateful heart, which is sensible of the blessings of redemption.

This is the nature of the duty: the reasons for practising it follow—O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good. He is essential goodness, being the origin and fountain from whence all created goodness flowed. Goodness in the Deity denotes that disposition whereby he is inclined to communicate happiness. It was owing to this beneficent attribute that he created the beautiful system of the world out of nothing, and made all the living creatures in it to share and partake of his goodness: and therefore, after he had finished the works of creation and formation, he pronounced them all to be very good. And they were good, and they continued so, until sin corrupted them: for sin brought in all evil which is the opposite to goodness, and then the remembrance of God's former goodness only aggravated our guilt, and made our evil more inexcusable: and before our guilty consciences could be set at rest, we must have a firm reliance upon some more amiable attribute than goodness, which we sinners had offended against, and which does not imply any disposition to forgive the offence. God had been good to the innocent; but he must be just to sinners. If he had freely exercised his goodness to us while innocent, yet, when we offended, we put ourselves out of the reach of his goodness, and then justice took place: and when justice was extreme, to mark what we had done amiss, what could sinful wretched man hope for? Nothing from goodness; because its former favours had been abused and repaid with ingratitude: therefore guilt and misery must have been our portion for ever, unless some more gracious attribute than goodness should be revealed to us; and therefore the Holy Spirit makes mercy, even eternal mercy, wait upon goodness, that it may become a

proper subject of thanksgiving: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." Goodness was shown to the innocent—mercy is for the guilty: and we can thank God for the goodness of creation when we have experienced the mercies of redemption. Mercy is that disposition in the Deity, whereby he is inclinable to relieve the miserable: it is the attribute of pity and compassion, which can be exercised only upon those who are in distress. Mercy has for its object sin, with all its miserable consequences; and it is exercised in removing them; and the person by whom it is exercised is our most compassionate high priest, Christ Jesus, to whose mercy it is owing that we were not consumed: for when goodness could no longer employ its kind offices for us, then our merciful God was pleased to bring into execution that gracious plan of redemption which had been contrived before all worlds, and by which many sons were to be brought into glory. The holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, out of infinite love and compassion, were pleased to agree upon this plan, and to sustain distinct offices in the economy of it; and as their persons are equally infinite, their economical actions must consequently be equally infinite. God the Father covenanted to demand perfect satisfaction for sin, and to accept the perfect satisfaction made by the obedience and sufferings of God the Son, which he covenanted to make in our stead, and as our representative in the human nature: and God the Holy Spirit covenanted to render the obedience and sufferings of Christ effectual to believers, and by his grace to carry on the whole work of redemption in their hearts. St. Paul assures us that the covenant of grace, which is the fountain of all mercy, was made before the foundation of the world; and this he repeats in several of his Epistles. The Psalmist teaches the same doctrine, and frequently calls upon us to thank God, because his mercy is for ever and ever—because his mercy is everlasting—and, in the next text, because his mercy endureth for ever. The word *endureth* is inserted by the translators; for there is no verb in the original; neither, in strictness of speech, could there be any: because there was no time wherein this mercy was not exercised, neither will there be any time when the exercise of it will fail. It was begun before all worlds, when the covenant of grace was made; and it will continue to the ages of eternity, after this world is destroyed. So that mercy was, and is, and will be, for ever; and sinful, miserable man, may always find relief from this eternal mercy, whenever the sense of his misery disposes him to seek for it. And does not this motive loudly call upon us to give thanks, because there is mercy with God—mercy to pity the miserable—and even to relieve them—although they do not deserve it; for mercy is all free grace and unmerited love. Oh! how adorable then and gracious is this attribute! How sweet is it, and full of consolation to the guilty! May God bring all the comforts of it to your hearts; and if you desire, if you would know, what these comforts are, ask the redeemed of the Lord, and they will tell you, that his mercies are great beyond description. They can say, upon their own experience, that they have found the mercies of redemption to be in number, in value, and in duration, more and greater than they can express: and to their experience the Holy Spirit refers you in the 2nd verse: The redeemed of the Lord shall say so—they shall say that he is good, and that his mercies are eternal. What, then, is this redemption of which they speak in such high terms? And why do they make it the chief subject of their thanksgiving? The reason follows—because he redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. Moses has given us, in the law, a clear and full idea of what we are to understand by the word *gal*, here rendered *redeemed*. If any person was either sold for a slave, or carried away for a captive, then his kinsman who was nearest to him in blood had the right and equity of redemption. But no other person was suffered to redeem. And such a kinsman is called the redeemer, when he paid down the price for which his relation was sold to be a slave, or paid the ransom for which he was led captive. And there is another remarkable instance in the law, wherein it was provided, that, in case any person was found murdered, then the nearest to him in blood was to prosecute the murderer, and to bring him to justice; and this nearest relation, thus avenging the murder, is called by the same name—a redeemer. And how beautifully is the office of our great Re-

deemer represented under these three instances! He was to us such a redeemer in spirituals, as these were in temporals: for sin had brought all mankind into slavery and captivity, and had murdered us. We are slaves to sin, and captives to Satan. St. Paul confesses both: sold under sin, says he, and led away captive under the law of sin. And in this state of bondage and captivity we had a most cruel tyrant to reign over us; even he who was a murderer from the heginning, and who employed us in those slavish services, where we could find no peace in time, nor any rest to eternity: for he gave us no wages but death—death of the hody in this world, and death of the soul from God in the next world for ever. O miserable man! who shall deliver thee? who shall redeem thee from the body of this death? Thou art entirely, eternally miserahle in thyself; hut thou mayst thank God, through Christ our Lord, that there is a Redeemer who is able to save thee. He has every qualification which the law required in a redeemer; and he is besides almighty; for he is true and very God, equal in all things with the Father and the Holy Spirit: and as soon as sin was in the world, he entered upon his gracious office of redeemer; for he was the Lamb slain in type and figure from the foundation of the world. And when he had a body prepared for him, wherein he was to he slain indeed, and was made flesh of our flesh, then he completed the legal character of a redeemer. When he was pleased to unite our human nature to his divine, then he was nearest of kin to us. By this wonderful union he hecame our hrother, and next to us in hlood: and thus he was perfectly able to fulfil the law of our redemption, which suffered none to have the right and equity of redeeming, except the nearest kinsman. And to this our God condescended. Oh, amazing instance of his divine love! that God should be united to man, and partake of our human nature, that we might partake of his divine! this is the great mystery of godliness. We can never adore, never praise him enough for it, because hy it we receive full redemption. This most high God, who was also man, united in one Christ, came into the world to redeem us. And the same person, heing hoth God and man, must merit for us, as God, in what he did for us as man. Accordingly, hy the merits of his obedience and sufferings, he paid the price of our redemption, and we were no longer the servants of sin; and hy his most precious blood shed upon the cross, hy his death and resurrection, he overcame both death and him who had the power of death: and hy delivering us in this manner from slavery and captivity, he fulfilled the third part of the Redeemer's office: for Satan was the murderer from the heginning, who had given both hody and soul a mortal wound of sin, which was certain death and eternal misery. And the Redeemer came to avenge the murder. He took our cause in hand, as heing our nearest kinsman; and it cost him his own life to avenge ours. He shed his own blood upon the cross to avenge our hlood; and he died, that we might be brought hack to life; and then he rose again, to demonstrate his victory over the infernal murderer. And he has now all power in heaven and earth, that he may effectually redeem every one who desires to he freed from the slavery of sin, from the captivity of Satan, and the power of death. Such is our all-sufficient Redeemer! and when we know and taste of his redeeming love, how can we then forbear to he thankful? Since he has redeemed us from the hand of the enemy, we cannot be silent in his praises: we must speak of them. He has heen so good and gracious to us, that it would he acting against our own sense and feeling if we did not praise his holy name: for we were in vile slavery to sin, and he redeemed us: we were in cruel captivity to Satan, and he redeemed us: we were under the power of death, temporal and eternal, and he redeemed us. And can we possibly forget how miserahle we were in ourselves, and yet how happy we are become in the Redeemer? And while we remember this, what must we be, if ever we cease to give him thanks and praises? He was to us a most hlessed and most loving Redeemer: for that he, whom all the heavenly host adore, would vouchsafe to look down with pity upon our wretched state, and would descend from the throne of his eternal glory to visit us vile sinners—slaves—and captives—nay, would become our brother, our nearest kinsman, that he might he our lawful Redeemer—nay more, would come to suffer and to die for his own rehellious creatures!—this was the

most wonderful condescension of our Lord Jesus. And ought it not to endear him to us exceedingly? Should not our hearts overflow with gratitude, and our tongues incessantly break forth into praise, for such unmerited love? Oh may he raise our hearts, and exalt our affections from every lower object to the contemplation of his infinite love! There never was, nor is to be, any love like our Redeemer's to us. Happy are we; if there be no love in our breasts like what we bear to him! The love of our God coming from heaven, taking our nature, obeying and suffering in it, bleeding and dying upon the cross to redeem us—us miserable vile sinners—here is all that we can admire; here is all that we can adore. Jesus, our Lord, claims our highest admiration, our lowest adoration; so that his praises are a subject which can never be exhausted: for they are to be our employment and happiness for ever, and we become fitted for them, indeed we begin them, by our present thankfulness. O thou almighty Saviour! make us daily more and more thankful, that, by the continual exercise of thanksgiving upon earth, we may be prepared to sing the praises of our redeeming God for ever and ever.

The next motive, mentioned in the third verse, is peculiar to us heathen nations; *viz.* that Christ "hath redeemed us and gathered us out of all lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south." If any thing can inspire us with gratitude, this motive should prevail, because we cannot but feel the force of it, as it reminds us of that misery from which we in particular were redeemed. The Gentiles had wandered from God, and were so lost and bewildered in the mazes of error and superstition, that nothing but the almighty love of our Lord Jesus could have gathered them together into one church. All the heathen world lay in darkness and in the shadow of death, until the Sun of righteousness arose upon them with the bright beams of the gospel: they were ignorant, immoral, idolatrous; and because they had no desire to retain God in their memory, he therefore gave them over to a reprobate mind; and then, being utterly forsaken of him, they ran greedily into every kind of impurity and abominable uncleanness. St. Paul has given us a melancholy account of the Roman morals, at a time when we have been taught that polite learning flourished among them in its highest perfection. Read his first chapter to the Romans, and you will find that they were monsters of impiety, although they could write with all the elegance and beauty of classical learning. And the rest of the heathen nations were not indeed so corrupt, but they were sunk as low in ignorance and superstition as the Romans, and particularly our ancestors in this island, who were poor blind idolaters; they used to worship stocks and stones, and to fall down before trees and groves. And when the face of the whole earth was thus covered with the dark night of idolatry and immorality, then it pleased God to send the day-spring from on high to visit us. Our blessed Redeemer came to call us out of darkness into his marvellous light, and to gather us into the mystical body of his church, out of all lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. His church is the mystical body, of which he is the head; and whoever partakes of his redemption must be gathered from the world into this mystical body, and must be so united as to become a true living member of it. It was foretold by Moses, that unto Christ should the gathering of the people be; he was to gather the dispersed into one body. And the prophet Isaiah declares—"The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him: for I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory." Happy for us, these prophecies are now fulfilled. The love of our gracious Redeemer hath gathered some out of all nations and tongues; and blessed be his holy name for that he is daily gathering more, who come to Christ, and see his glory, and are thankful. Oh that more of the people were daily gathered unto him! We ought to pray earnestly for it, because there is no salvation for them who are not gathered into his mystical body, and united as closely to it as the branches of a vine are to the stock upon which they grow: for I am the vine, says the Redeemer himself; ye are the branches: abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

From hence it is evident that our blessed Redeemer has a mystical body, into

which all the redeemed are gathered, and in which they are living members, united to their sovereign head, enlivened by his grace; and actuated and influenced by his good Spirit; and where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty —a liberty from error—a liberty from sin and Satan—a liberty from death and the grave; so that in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, there is full and plenteous redemption. And can persons who partake of this redemption forbear to be thankful? It is impossible. While they have a lively sense of the Redeemer's love, they must be speaking his praises; and they will retain this lively sense so long as they remember from whence he redeemed them. When they lay dispersed, he gathered them. When they lay in ignorance, he enlightened them. When they were in the grossest idolatry, he converted them to the worship of the true God. When they were in the sink of sin and immorality, he brought them into the ways of righteousness, pardoning their past offences by his merits, and enabling them by his grace to proceed in the work of sanctification. And having thus gathered them together, he united them to himself, and made them living members of his mystical body; and in this happy union, how many spiritual comforts and blessings must they find! Their hearts will certainly overflow with love and gratitude to their most adorable Redeemer: and it will be to them indeed a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful: for he claims all their affections—they would live only to him—and therefore it would be really offering them violence to hinder them from speaking of him with the mouth, what the heart feels. He is so much the delight of their souls, that they had rather cease to breathe than cease to be thankful to their dearest Lord and Saviour. Daily will they be telling the wonders of his redemption, and giving thanks and honour unto him, so long as they have any being. And

May God enable every one of us to join our hearts and voices with theirs in giving praise and honour to our redeeming Lord! And having finished the paraphrase upon the three verses of the text, I come now to call upon you to join your thanksgiving with all the other members of Christ's mystical body. You have heard what the duty is: it consists in the service of a grateful heart, which is perfectly sensible of the divine love—having not only experienced God's goodness, but also his mercy, even the eternal mercy of the covenant of grace—being redeemed from the slavery of sin, from the captivity of Satan, and from the power of death: and these redeemed of the Lord cannot but speak with gratitude of what he has done for their souls, especially such of the redeemed who were gathered out of all lands, who were scattered and alienated from God by sin, were in heathen idolatrous countries, out of the covenant of promise, and without hope in the world. When such persons are made to partake of the blessings of redemption, how will their hearts burn within them! How will their affections be fired! and with what a pure flame will the sweet incense of their thanksgiving ascend up before God! Certainly, their sense of this redemption will fill their souls with love and praise: for they will find themselves so happy in giving thanks to the God of all mercies, that the bent of their minds will always turn to this duty. It will become their perfect delight and joy to be employed in this part of devotion, which is by far the sweetest: for when a heart full of praise and gratitude pours out its adoration and thanks to its God and Saviour, oh how delightful must this devotion be! And when grace heightens it, and fires and inflames our hearts with the ardour of divine love, oh how heavenly must this devotion be! It is indeed the highest to which we can arise while we are in the body; and it must certainly be the most pleasing and grateful, because it is the devotion of heaven itself. It is the very service of that innumerable company of saints and angels who stand around the Redeemer's throne, and join their hearts and voices in heavenly harmony, giving thanks and honour and praise unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And must not this be a most sweet and delightful duty, which makes up a great part of the enjoyment and happiness of the blessed in heaven? Doubtless it must, even here, be exceedingly sweet to those persons who hope to find themselves happy for ever in the practice of it. So that whoever has the true Christian temper will be always giving thanks to his redeeming Lord, and will always, in so doing, find something of that pure delight and joy which the

glorified spirits in heaven find while they sing the praises of their redeeming God.

Oh let us then lift up our hearts, and join our voices with theirs! May we catch some of those heavenly strains with which they incessantly celebrate Jesus their most adorable Redeemer! And if we can catch some of their fire, we shall then feel what kind of joy it is to be truly and sincerely thankful to our blessed Lord. Oh may the Spirit of grace elevate and exalt our affections, and raise them to that high pitch of thanksgiving which may endear the duty to us, and make us in love with it, so long as we live. God grant he may! that my application may come with more power to your hearts: and I shall address it to two different sorts of persons. And,

First, There may perhaps be some among you who allow thanksgiving to be a pleasant duty; but yet you find in yourselves no disposition to practise it. After what has been said of the Redeemer's love to men, oh, it is a cutting reflection to hear that any of you should be in this cold, dead state. Would to God there were not one man upon earth, much less any one in this place, so insensible of our Lord's mercy! But if such there be, the Holy Spirit calls upon them, in the text, attentively to view what Christ has done for his people. The blessings of his redemption are sufficient, not only to awake them that are asleep, but also to raise up the dead in sin: for consider; he redeemed them from those enemies who had them in vile subjection and bondage. They were sold in sin, in slavery to their own natural lusts and appetites—captives to Satan, who treated them cruelly, putting them upon those miserable labours wherein they could work out nothing but their own damnation—and sin and Satan had delivered them over to it, putting them in the power of death, temporal and eternal. Such was their wretched condition. And do you believe it, or not? If you do not, you oppose God and his holy word, and every day's experience. If you do believe it, why are you not thankful for redemption? There can be but one reason; and that is, you have as yet no share in the mercies of the Redeemer. You know not your interest in him: for if you did, it would be as natural to offer him thanksgiving as it is to breathe: and so long as you withhold it from him, you are indeed in slavery and captivity, although you may not feel enough of your misery to make you wish for redemption. Sin and Satan have so deluded you, that you choose to continue slaves and captives to them rather than to be set at liberty by Jesus Christ. And having no desire to find an interest in his redemption, you have therefore no disposition to be thankful to him for it. This is a most dangerous state: and may the eternal Spirit open your eyes, and show you the danger of it, that you may flee for your life to the God of all mercy and forgiveness, and may find abundant reason to be thankful for his redeeming love!

But I would hope there are very few of you thus indisposed to the practice of thanksgiving, and therefore I turn myself with joy to those who are disposed and willing to be thankful. You have heard, my Christian brethren, of the infinite love and mercy of our blessed Saviour, and how by his free grace he redeemed you from the hand of the enemy, and gathered you out of all lands into his mystical body. When you were sold slaves to sin, captives to Satan, and given over to the power of death, then your God vouchsafed to become man to redeem you: he took your flesh; for the law required that the next relation, and he only, should be the redeemer: he was made nearest to you in blood, that he might fulfil the character of a lawful redeemer. The almighty God, the Creator of all things, became your brother. Oh astonishing condescension! and he paid down the full price for your redemption, and he paid it with joy, although he bled and laid down his life for payment. But such was the infinite value and merit of his most precious blood, that it redeemed us from slavery, redeemed us from captivity, redeemed us from the power of death. It obtained for us the most full and plenteous redemption—redemption from all the evils of sin in this world, and redemption to all the joys of the next world, for ever and ever. And finding yourselves thus redeemed from the present evils of sin, and entitled to the future joys of heaven, how can you forbear to give thanks to this most blessed Redeemer? While you find his graces and comforts in your souls, you cannot

cease praising him. I hope your praises will never cease; but it will be your joy and delight in time, as it is to be your happiness to eternity, to give honour and glory to the Lamb who was slain, and has redeemed you unto God by his blood. It has been the subject and design of this discourse to bring you into this thankful frame and temper of mind. And if you are thankful, if you do but desire to be thankful, you will readily join your hearts with mine in our requests to God, to make us more thankful, saying,

O most adorable God and Saviour, we beseech thee to send thy blessing upon what we have heard this day out of thy holy word. Endue it with thy power and efficacy, that it may reach our hearts, and may be the means of making us more thankful to thee. And give us grace, blessed Lord, to grow and improve in thankfulness; and let thy praises become more and more our delight. And to that end, be pleased to let us know our interest in thy great redemption, that we all may now praise thee with joyful lips, and may join our thanksgiving with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, to laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of the glory of thy redemption. Glory be to thee for it, O Jesus Christ, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to whom be equal honour, worship, and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON III.

Psalm cvii. 4—10.

They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men; for he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

The general subject of this sacred hymn is thanksgiving: the motives to induce us to be thankful are taken from the mercies of redemption. And this redemption is here considered in several views, according to the several distresses from which we are redeemed; and each of these is used as a fresh motive to heighten our gratitude, and to inspire us with more praise to Jesus, our most adorable God and Redeemer.

In the last lecture I considered the three first verses; from which it appeared that the redeemed of the Lord were the persons here called upon to be thankful: they were redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the lands from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south; and while they had any sense of these great blessings, they would never be silent in his praises who had been to them an almighty Deliverer. The Holy Spirit, speaking of the same persons in the same circumstances, offers them another motive for thankfulness in the words which I have read. It is a clear and convincing argument; and I hope the inspirer of it will carry it with conviction to your hearts. He knew what was the most proper method to affect us; and he will certainly accompany his own methods with his own grace: and therefore every one of you may expect to reap that profit from this scripture, which the Holy Spirit intended it should be the means of conveying to the faithful, if you put yourselves under his guidance and seek his blessing, while I am,

First, Going through a paraphrase upon the words, and then,

Secondly, Applying them as a motive to inspire you with thankfulness.

And first, The words relate to the redeemed, and describe the state which they were in before they partook of the blessings of redemption. Before they were gathered together out of all lands, and admitted into the flock of the great shep-

herd and bishop of souls, they wandered in the wilderness, where they were neither fed in green pastures nor led forth beside the waters of comfort. Their spiritual state was so much like the natural condition of a dry barren wilderness, that the scriptures commonly describe it by this name. Ezekiel calls it, the wilderness of the people—the desolate state of the heathen people—and not of the country: and the prophet Isaiah foretels the happy change of this desolated state of the heathen people, when the Holy Spirit should be poured upon them, xxxii. 15: "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field." When the abundant streams of his grace should descend upon the heathen world, then the wilderness and the solitary place should be glad, and the desert should rejoice and blossom as the rose—it should blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. But before this blessed change was made, we were all in a waste howling wilderness, where, the Psalmist says, we wandered in a solitary way; for by sin we had lost the way to heaven. All flesh—the whole human nature—says Moses, had corrupted his way upon earth: and this corruption soon discovers itself, and breaks out very early in life; for the prophet declares, that as soon as they are born, they go astray; and when they grow up, they have no power to return into the right way, but are like lost sheep, which can never of themselves find the way back again into the fold after they have once strayed from it. And therefore, in the 53rd of Isaiah, our wretched condition is represented by this image: All we—not one of us excepted—all we, like sheep, have gone astray: we had wandered from the fold of the church, had strayed from the true shepherd, and got out of his pleasant and fruitful pastures into the desolate wilderness, where we had lost ourselves, and could find no way out of it, and no food in it: for, while all the heathen world wandered in this solitary wilderness, they were hungry and thirsty, even to such a degree, that their soul fainted in them: for want of food, their strength began to fail them, and they were even hard at death's door.

Now, if you consider the propriety of this image only in its natural light, it is very striking, though it be very familiar. Suppose a person to be travelling through some desolate uninhabited country, like the deserts of Arabia, and unhappily lose his way, and after wandering for some days, all his provision being gone, his spirits and his strength fail him, hunger and thirst begin to prey upon his vitals, and, no hope of deliverance from any human means appearing, his soul really faints in him, and he gives himself up to despair. Is not this a scene of exquisite distress, and such as a person of the least tenderness cannot behold without being greatly moved with pity? for this miserable traveller cannot support himself much longer; his dissolution is drawing nigh; he already sinks under the fatigues of mind and body; and famine will soon put an end to his wretched life. And if you should happen to be passing by this way, soon after the breath was gone out of his body, and should see his ghastly appearance, how pale and emaciated and frightful his dead corpse looked, then your heart would melt over him, and you could not avoid shedding one compassionate tear. But how much more sensibly would his death affect you, if you began to be apprehensive of this same danger, if you had also lost your way, were without food, your spirits and strength failing, and scarce any hopes left of your finding the right way again? When you thus made his case your own, your concern would be double, and you would be in the utmost distress for your own safety, seeing before your eyes an unhappy fellow-creature, who perished in the same circumstances.

Now if this case, which is only a temporal calamity, and to which death will put an end, would naturally move our pity, and excite our compassion, how much more should the same case in spirituals affect us, because here the calamity is endless, and death does not finish, but rather is an entrance and opening into eternal distress? So that if the case in common life moved you greatly, then this, in spiritual life, should move you infinitely more. Call up, then, the softest emotions of your tenderness and compassion, and mourn over that unhappy person whose spiritual misery is painted out and represented by the lost, starving, and dying traveller in the wilderness. You may see, from what his body suffers,

how much the soul of the poor helpless sinner is to suffer, who has lost his way to heaven, and who wanders in search of it without any guide or direction, and, after all his labour and pains to find it out, wearied and hungry, and fainting for thirst, he is forced to give over the search: his soul is ready to perish, for want of the divine support, and of the streams of divine grace, which Christ and the Holy Spirit only can give, and which are as necessary to the life of the soul as meat and drink are to the life of the body. And if none be soon sent to this lost sinner, he dies, not only to this world, but he also dies from God, and from all the glories of the heavenly kingdom—he is eternally ruined and undone. Here then is an object a thousand times more miserable than the poor traveller who perished in the wilderness. And can you behold; how is it possible for you, my brethren, to think of this infinitely more miserable object, and not to be infinitely more affected with it? Doubtless, every one among you who can feel for others, and has any bowels of compassion in him, must mourn over this unhappy man, who is just falling into torments, which know no intermission—no end. Oh! it is a dreadful case—beyond description distressful. God grant you may never know what it is to be tormented for ever and ever in the flames of hell! And if you can thus pity another person in this distress, oh, shut not up the bowels of your compassion against your own selves; for this is indeed your own case. You are this very lost ruined sinner. Every one of you is, every son of Adam is, in this wilderness: in it you have lost your way to heaven, and with the best of your natural abilities and reasoning powers, you cannot find it again; or if you could find it, yet you are not able to walk in it, because you are dying of hunger and thirst, whether you feel it or not: for you have no food from Christ, who says, I am the bread of life, to support your sinful souls, and therefore you must perish with hunger; and you have no grace from the Holy Spirit, which is the water of life, and therefore you must perish with thirst. This is, by nature, the condition of every man who cometh into the world: and whoever thou art, who hast not seen thyself in this condition, thou art still in the waste and howling wilderness. Although the body may lodge in a palace, yet thy poor soul is in a desert: for if thou hast not yet found thy lost estate, thou hast not yet taken one step toward thy recovery. If thou hast not seen and felt thy misery—that thou hast lost thy way to heaven, and hast no merit to support thee, no grace to sanctify thee—if thou hast not seen this, O miserable man! thou art blind indeed: thou art under the strongest delusion of sin, which shows its power over thee, by thus obscuring and darkening all the faculties of the soul. But if it should please God to open thine eyes, thou wouldst, to thy amazement, see nothing around thee but a waste barren wilderness, where thou now fanciest nature to be flourishing and fruitful. And may his good Spirit indeed enlighten your understandings, and show you evidently your miserable state, that there may be raised in your hearts a strong cry for deliverance. And if you find any prayer, if it be but a desire, rising in your minds, to accept of full and free redemption through Jesus Christ, hear how comfortably the Holy Spirit exhorts you to apply to him in your distress, as it follows in the sixth verse: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses." They were in the wilderness, had lost their way, had no food, were perishing, they could only cry unto the Lord; they had no help or hope left but throwing themselves upon his mercy to pray him to interpose in their behalf. When misery brings us thus to know and feel our wretchedness, then our deliverance draweth nigh; for God is always more ready to help than we are to pray to him for help. And we cannot have a happier proof of his readiness to help than in his sending us those troubles which send us to him, and which thereby bring us deliverance. And we have great reason to be thankful unto him, and to kiss the rod, whenever its chastisements dispose us to seek his face. "I will go and return to my place," says the God of all mercy, in the prophet Hosea, v. 15, "till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." How full is this passage of the most tender love and affection! You see our God sends afflictions, even to his enemies, with a design to do them good: he suffers them to fall into distresses, from which the arm of flesh cannot deliver them, that they may be brought to acknowledge their

offence, and to seek his face who is almighty to deliver. And whenever outward sufferings produce this inward humiliation, then the design of them is answered; for then the mind is rightly disposed to look up to heaven, from whence only cometh help in time of need. And they cried unto the Lord in their trouble; they saw the misery of their fallen state; they felt their guilt and wretchedness; they found no help in the wilderness of this world; and, deeply abased, and thoroughly humbled with the sense of their sinfulness, they cried unto the Lord for help: and Jesus heard them. The God of love heard the first sigh of their broken hearts, and, before they cried unto him, he was at hand to save. He is an almighty Saviour, whose love is as infinite as his power; he is always ready to save unto the uttermost. Whoever seeks, shall find his grace, either to show him his guilt and misery, or effectually to remove them. And if any of you are now sensible of guilt and misery, make a trial of his redeeming love. Go to him with the sincere desires of your hearts to be pardoned and saved, and he will as soon cease to be God as he will reject you. He will not cast you out. He shed his blood for you on the cross; he loved you more than his own life! he even died to save you; and he cannot cast you out. If you desire him to save you, you are saved: for they cried unto the Lord Jesus, and he delivered them out of their distresses; they had nothing to offer him but prayers and entreaties; they could only cry for pardon and mercy. This is all that they could do, and all that he wants; for, so soon as they cried for salvation, he saved them: his free grace led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. They could not help themselves: they could only cry for help; and, so soon as they cried to him, his free grace brought them a complete deliverance; for, whereas they had lost their way, he brought them forth by the right way: his good Spirit led them out of the wilderness unto him who calls himself the way, the truth, and the life; and in him they found an abiding city, whose builder and maker is God. This city is the church, which Christ hath purchased with his own blood; and whoever is admitted into it, and is a true living member of it, can want no manner of thing that is good: for Jesus Christ the Redeemer, the Head of the church, has provided every thing that can make his members happy in time and to eternity. In time, they have his good Spirit to enlighten them, and to show them the way out of the wilderness, his merits to justify them, his grace to sanctify them: they are holy and happy, and in eternity they will enjoy these heavenly blessings to which they have already a sure right and title by the merits and free grace of Jesus Christ. And

When such persons remember what they formerly were in themselves, and what they are now made in him, how can they forbear to be thankful? How can the redeemed of the Lord be silent in the praises of the Redeemer, when they consider out of what a desolate wilderness he brought them when they were lost and bewildered in it, were so hungry and thirsty that their soul fainted in them? Must not the very remembrance of these blessings inspire them with thankfulness? When nothing but death and endless ruin lay before them, he was pleased of his own free grace to hear the very first cry which they sent up to him for deliverance; and he came with all the tender mercies of our God to save them. He turned the wilderness into a paradise; he put his revealed directions into their hands, and sent his good Spirit into their hearts to enlighten them, and to lead them into the right way; he gave them the bread of life to allay their hunger, and the waters of grace and comfort to quench their thirst; and, having thus blessed them with all spiritual blessings, how can they—how is it possible they should—be silent in his praises? While their hearts are full of gratitude to him, shall they not be telling with their mouths of the wonders which he hath done for their salvation? Doubtless, they will be speaking of their most adorable Redeemer all the day long; for this is so just a tribute of praise, it is so easy and pleasant a return; and besides, it is the only return we can make for his inestimable blessings, that this will and must make him. And this is the grateful return which the Holy Spirit calls upon us, in the next words, to make to our redeeming God—"Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." He has done wonders indeed—he never failed in the miraculous blessings of his free grace. Oh that we may never fail in thankful-

ness for them! But certain it is, that we have all failed; and the best of us lament our failing the most; for thankful, as he deserves, none of us are. It is a rule of common life, that thankfulness should be proportioned to the benefits received; and whoever does not act up to this rule, is reckoned basely ungrateful among men. In religion, the same rule is just and equitable. But because Christ has been so infinitely merciful, that our thankfulness cannot be proportioned to the merits received, yet we are therefore more inexcusable if we are not as grateful as it is possible for us to be: for to whom men give much, of them they always require the more; and to whom Christ has forgiven much, of them he requires the more love and praise. The more we receive, the greater is our debt; and to consider that we can never repay it, should most effectually stir us up to be thankful. Oh how earnestly should we pray for, how incessantly should we be seeking, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to enable us to rise to higher degrees of gratitude. His merits will be still above our praises, let us rise ever so high: but let us not stop until the heart be full of thankfulness, and every faculty of the mind and body be ready to give honour and glory to their redeeming God. "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord Jesus for his mercies, and declare the wonders which he hath done for the salvation of men: for he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." In these last words you see how the prophet exalts the free grace of God, in order to raise and exalt your gratitude: for these sinful lost travellers in the wilderness could do nothing to deliver themselves: they had tried every thing in their power, and could not succeed: they were helpless, faint, and miserable: they have only spirits enow left to cry unto God. And what haste does mercy make! for the moment they cry, Jesus was at hand to save. The God of love came with all the blessings of his redeeming grace, and poured them plentifully upon these poor sinners, when he had made them sensible of their want of them, and they applied to him for relief. For he satisfieth the longing soul—the longing soul is that which finds itself empty—which is convinced of its nothingness and wretchedness, and, so soon as it can confess itself to be quite destitute of every saving grace—does indeed hunger and thirst after the graces of Jesus Christ—then he never fails to satisfy this empty soul, and to fill this hungry soul with goodness. Such is Jesus, the God of our salvation; and thus wonderful is he in his mercies to the children of men. Oh that they would therefore praise him for his infinite, his eternal mercies! and grant, O blessed Jesus, that many persons who hear me this day may have reason to praise thee. Bring them by thy grace, O almighty Redeemer, out of the wilderness of sin and error, and let this scripture be fulfilled in every one of us, that we may join in giving thanks to thy holy name, now and for ever.

Thus much for the paraphrase upon the words: they contain a brief history of man's fall and misery, and of his restoration through Jesus Christ; which are described under these particulars:—

First, The lost state of men by nature.

Secondly, They are brought to a right sense of it, and cry to the Lord Jesus for deliverance.

Thirdly, He hears them, and delivers them out of all their distresses. And

Fourthly, The tribute of thanks due to him for this great deliverance.

To each of these points I will speak, as briefly as I can, by way of spiritual use and application. And first, The lost state of men by nature is here represented under the striking images of persons who have lost their way in a barren wilderness, where they are ready to perish with fatigue and famine. Now, my brethren, let me put this plain question to you; and may God put it to your hearts! Have you ever seen yourselves in this lost state? If you have, give glory and thanks to Jesus your almighty Redeemer. If you have not, you are in the utmost danger; and yet you live secure: you are still in your sins, with all the guilt of them about you, and destruction lies before you: you are on the very precipice: in one moment you may fall into eternity, where nothing but endless torments can be your portion. And what a strong delusion of sin is it, that you, who fear and dread a little bodily pain in this life, should not be under the least apprehension about the endless pains of body and soul in the next life? What

is able thus to infatuate you against your own reason and your senses? You have not, surely, persuaded yourselves that the account which the Psalmist gives of your sinful miserable state is not matter of fact! If you have fallen into this delusion, hear what the word of God, and the voice of reason, and the sad experience of every day, loudly bear witness. The scripture is clear, that all we—every son of Adam—all we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have strayed from the paradise of God into the wilderness of this sinful world; and further, the scripture teaches that they are all gone out of the way—all—not one excepted; "they are all gone out of the way; they are altogether become abominable; there is also none that doeth good, no not one." And the consequence of our wandering is thus described:—"Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known." The sense and meaning of these passages you will not dispute; their authority you do not deny: and how, then, can you resist their evidence, since the reason of mankind, Jews, Heathens, and Christians, confirms it, and every day's melancholy experience renders it more clear and self-evident? If you will not believe this cloud of witnesses, you must believe nothing: for you may as well doubt whether there are any such beings as men, as whether they be fallen sinful beings. The one is an object of sense as much as the other: and therefore, unless you have taken your rest in absolute scepticism, and are quite settled upon the lees and dregs of infidelity, you must allow that mankind are sinful and miserable. Sin is the parent of all their misery; for it separates them from God, who is the parent of all good. It separates them in this world from his grace, and it will separate them in the next world from his glory for ever and ever. And now, my brethren, being convinced of your lost state and sinful condition, what do you resolve to do in consequence of this conviction? Will you go away from hence with this conviction upon your minds, and sin on as securely as you did before? God forbid. Your guilt would then be increased; your case would grow more desperate; you would then choose misery—even eternal misery—with your eyes open. Oh what a dreadful infatuation would this be! May the Lord Jesus keep you from it; and may his heavenly grace second my entreaties that you may now—this very moment, see your lost state by nature, and cry out unto him in the anguish of your souls for his grace! And if it be but a deep sigh from the heart, or a short prayer, Lord Jesus save, or else we perish! This the God of love will hear and answer. For it follows, in the next words of the text, "When they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, then he delivered them out of their distresses." They could do no more to deliver themselves than you can do: they could only cry to him in prayer to save them, and according to the greatness of his mercies he freely gave them full redemption. This is the established method of his proceeding. So soon as he sent his grace to show them their wretchedness, and to dispose them to cry to him for deliverance, he was ready and able to save them to the uttermost; and he is now as ready and as able to deal thus graciously with you. If you cry unto him for help, he will save. How sweetly does he invite, how powerfully does he persuade you now to cry aloud for his redeeming grace! "Call upon me," says he, "in the day of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me." Therefore now call upon him: let the sense of your guilt and misery now make you earnest and importunate in your requests: call upon him in the day of trouble: and what an encouragement does he give you to persevere! So I will hear thee; I shed my blood for thy guilt, and my grace is almighty to remove thy misery: only seek them in prayer, and I will hear and answer, and thou shalt praise me; thou shalt have reason to praise me for the abundant mercies of my free and full redemption. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord Jesus! &c.

I have been very short upon the three last particulars in the text; *viz.* the sense which these sinners had of their misery, their crying for deliverance, and the tribute of thanks due to Christ for delivering them, because I shall have frequent occasion to speak upon them in the following parts of the Psalm. But enough, I hope, has been said to lay open this most sweet and comfortable portion of scripture, and to warm your hearts with the consideration of it. You see that the mercies of our God are above our misery. Though by nature we wander like

sheep in the barren wilderness of this world, yet we have a most tender shepherd, who is always seeking to bring us back into the fruitful pastures of his church. Though in this wilderness we can find no abiding city, yet within the fold and pale of his church we may find rest unto our souls. Though we have no spiritual support in ourselves, yet his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; and when his good Spirit applies the merits of them to our hearts, then we have true spiritual life abiding in us. Though our souls fainted within us while we wandered in the wilderness, yet Jesus, the God of all consolation, will refresh the fainting soul with his reviving grace, and will supply it with every manner of thing that is good, through the ages of eternity. So that he is more merciful than we are miserable; and in this respect his mercies are over all his works; for that he only waits until we have seen our misery, and are humbled enough to cry to him for relief, and then he shows he is at hand, a God to save. Oh that you may all this day experience his almighty power, and have fresh proof of his redeeming love! and every one of you who desires it will readily join with me in requesting his blessing on what you have now heard.

O most mighty God and Saviour! we acknowledge and confess our lost estate by nature: for all men have wandered in the wilderness out of the way, and have found no abiding city: they could find no way out of the wilderness, no place to rest, and no food to support them in it; hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted in them; but so soon as the sense of their misery disposed them to cry to thee, blessed Jesus, thou wast ready to deliver them out of all their distresses. Now, almighty Lord, deliver us, and extend the same mercies to this whole congregation; and let not one person among them leave this place without being first convinced of his own misery, and then of thy all-sufficiency to redeem him from it. Bring what has been said upon these truths home to all our hearts, and carry it with thy divine power and efficacy to our consciences, that we may now cry to thee with one voice—Lord Jesus save, or else we perish. Hear us, thou God of love, and be unto us an almighty Saviour, that we may bless thee with grateful hearts for having brought us up this day out of the wilderness of the world, here to the house of the Lord, where we have found reason to be thankful as long as we live, and to declare the wonders which thou hast done for our salvation. Grant this, O most adorable Jesus, to the glory of God the Father, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit upon all our hearts, now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen*.

SERMON IV.

Psalm cvii. 10—17.

Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High: therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses: he brought them out of darkness and out of the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! for he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

The Holy Spirit sets before us in these words a second image of our misery by nature. He has called upon the redeemed of the Lord to be thankful to Jesus, the God of their redemption; and, in order to exalt and raise their thankfulness the more, he gives them four images, in which the misery of fallen man is placed in different views. In the first, he is represented as lost in a wilderness, where, after much wandering and weariness, fainting with hunger and thirst, he is just ready to perish: but finding no help upon earth, and being brought to a deep

sense of his distress, he cries unto the Lord in his trouble, and Jesus was at hand to save: for so soon as the sinner was disposed to accept, the Saviour was willing to bestow free and full redemption. This was the subject of the last lecture. We have in the words before us a second image of man's fallen condition, in which the distresses of it are greatly heightened, and if I were able to paint the exquisite misery of it, so that you might see it in a strong light, it could not fail of having a great influence upon every unconverted person. I will therefore endeavour to set it before your eyes, in as striking colours as I am able; and I hope the same good Spirit who inspired this passage will be pleased to accompany us this day in the consideration of it, and to supply the imperfections of my discourse by his divine grace in your hearts. O eternal Spirit, now preside over us, and show thyself to be a God, by applying the doctrine with power and energy to every one of our consciences, while I am,

First, Laying open the sense and meaning of the words; and

Secondly, Considering their spiritual use and application.

It must be remembered that the words belong to the redeemed of the Lord; they are the persons called upon to be thankful; and the motives to excite their thankfulness are taken from a review of their miseries and distresses before they obtained redemption: and these miseries and distresses were of so many various kinds, and so very numerous, that they could not be represented to the life in one picture. In order to set them before our eyes in full proportion, it was necessary to draw them in different scenes; and therefore the Holy Spirit has given us, in these four paintings, a perfect description of man's sinful and miserable condition by nature. In the first he is represented as having lost the way to heaven, and wandering in a wilderness, weary with fatigue, faint with famine, ready to perish: in the second, his distress is heightened; for he falls into a pit of darkness and the shadow of death, where the enemy finds him, and puts him into close confinement, binding him with the heavy chains of affliction and iron. The scripture and every day's experience confirm this description; for the first words, "such as sit in darkness," are true of every son of Adam in his natural state. Sin cut off all communication between God and us, and thereby rendered us quite ignorant and blind in all spiritual knowledge: for if the eye of the mind have no light from the eternal Sun of righteousness, it is in the same state with the eye of the body, if it have no light from the created sun in the heavens: so that all the spiritual world was covered with gross darkness and blindness until the light of life arose; for thus saith the Lord God, speaking of Christ: "I have given thee for a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Now it is certain that the Gentiles, to whom Christ was given for a light, were not literally blind: they had good eyes, and could see outward objects clear enough; but the eye of the soul was entirely blind, insomuch that Christ came down from heaven miraculously to open it. And he sent out his apostles for the same purpose; and when he called Paul to the apostleship, he gave him his commission in these words: "I send thee now unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light." You cannot suppose that all the Gentiles were blind, to whom St. Paul was sent; and yet they had eyes which were not open until the gospel enlightened them; and these were the eyes of the mind: for when the Gentiles were turned from darkness to light, then was fulfilled that which is written by the prophet Isaiah: 'The eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness:"—the Sun of righteousness arose upon their obscurity and darkness, and so enlightened the eyes of the spiritually blind, that they clearly discovered the right way to heaven. And the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, were by nature in this blind state: Zacharias, in the gospel, confesses it, "The day-spring (*i. e.* Christ) from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death:"—all mankind, without Christ—Jews and Gentiles—not only sit in darkness, but also in the shadow of death. Such is the blind and miserable condition of sinners! Sin has subjected them to temporal and to eternal death; but because the death of the soul, when it perishes eternally from God, is not an object of sense, the Holy Spirit was therefore pleased to give us a shadow of it, by the death of the body; when it perishes

to this world. And both these kinds of death entered into the world by sin; and what the body suffers by dying to this world, is indeed but a shadow of what the soul suffers when it dies from God in the next world. And yet, it is a very just and expressive shadow; for as the body, when it dies, has no longer any sense of perception of the outward objects of this life, but totally perishes from the light and spirit of the animal world, and from all the joys and comforts which they administer, so the soul, when it dies from God, has no longer any sense or perception of the inward objects of its life, but totally perishes from the eternal light and spirit of the heavenly world, and from all the joys and comforts which they administer. Thus bodily death is a shadow of spiritual—and temporal of eternal. I might trace the likeness in more particulars: but this may suffice to explain what the Psalmist means by the shadow of death. He supposes the mortality of the body to be a shadow of the sad estate into which sin brought the soul. All mankind is subject to this mortality, which is but the shadow of death; for in the death of the body we have a mournful picture of the more miserable death of the soul, which is the substance of death: this is the reality and substance of what the other is but a shadow. Oh what a distressful scene then is this! Here is nothing but darkness and the shadow of death—a body mortal and perishing, and, while it lives, is in bondage and the fear of death, terrified at the very approach of the shadow—and how much more in dread of the substance! And yet this distress is still heightened: for these poor sufferers are so chained down, that they cannot escape from the power of their enemies; they cannot stir one step out of this darkness and shadow of death; because they are fast bound in affliction and iron. Sin brought us into this darkness and shadow of death, and then chained us down to these miseries. The scripture frequently speaks of the bonds of sin, and describes man, in his fallen state, to be as much a slave to sin as if he were really chained down. And indeed a chain of the hardest iron, or of the toughest steel, is more easily broken than a long habit of sin; for the soul is then fettered, and bound as much as if the man were chained to the galleys; and yet he endures it willingly, although no galley slave is put to harder service, or has a more cruel and inexorable tyrant over him. Ought not this woman, says Christ, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond? And Satan hath bound the whole human race, as well as this woman: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage; and he overcame us all by sin, and then bound us with the strong chains of it, which no human power can loose. He only, who overcame Satan, is able to release his prisoners. And the Psalmist, in the 68th Psalm, enumerating some of our Lord's great deliverances, says, in the 6th verse, "He bringeth out those which are bound with chains;" and the prophet Isaiah declares, "that he should open the prison to them that are bound." The scriptures are to be spiritually applied: for Christ never released any prisoners by breaking open the prison-doors and snapping their bands asunder. We meet with nothing of this kind in his life: but we read frequently of his delivering men from the bonds of their sins, and freeing them from Satan and death. From whence it follows, that unless our great Redeemer had come to break off our chains, we must have lain bound in affliction and iron for this life; and then have been reserved in everlasting chains under darkness in the next.

This is the true image and portraiture of every son of Adam. While he remains in his natural fallen state, he is in darkness and the shadow of death, fast bound in misery and iron. And how terrible is this situation!—to live in darkness, without one ray of divine light and comfort!—to be under the dismal gloom and shadow of death, and to be bound down to this misery by Satan, with his strongest fetters and chains! Certainly this is a scene of deep distress: and the view of it should lead us to inquire how the gracious Author of our being should suffer mankind to become subject to it; for he cannot be the cause of our misery: so that it must have been some great and heinous offence, by which we brought ourselves into these distresses. And let the Psalmist relate the reason: "They sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God." "Because they rebelled." This was the grand rebellion for which the

head of the family was attainted; and his attainder corrupted the blood of all his children. Our first parents took up arms against the supreme majesty of heaven, and vainly imagined that they could find knowledge and happiness contrary to his declared will, and in opposition to his almighty power; and they carried this vain imagination into act: they listed themselves under the devil's banner, and set themselves in battle array against God, defying his threatenings and his vengeance. In comparison of this great rebellion, all others have been only weak plots and conspiracies: for this was the highest crime man could commit; because, to whom much is given, it is just and equitable of them to require the more. And God had given to Adam greater gifts and abilities, with innocence to enable him to use them aright, than to any of his descendants, and had with the most tender affection counselled him against that very temptation, by which he was most liable to be seduced: therefore, when he rebelled against God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High, it was the most horrid rebellion that a creature could commit against its Creator. And it was far from cruelty in God: it was an act of justice, without severity, to suffer him to fall into the pit which he had dug for himself, and there to be taken by the enemy, and committed a prisoner to darkness and the shadow of death, and to be fast bound with misery and iron. But it may be inquired, Why are we subject to his misery? Because we could not but be involved in his guilt. His treason corrupted his blood; and being corrupt in the fountain, it could not but be corrupt in the streams which issue from it. We see a standing instance of this in the book of nature: a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. And we have a clear evidence of it in the book of God, which declares, that coming from a corrupt stock, we are altogether corrupt and abominable, being by nature children of wrath. And we have incontestible proof from the equity of our own laws, which not only punish treason with the loss of life in the traitor himself, but also with the loss of honours and estate in his descendants, to the latest posterity. Now, to deny that we are corrupt by nature against these evident proofs, is a full demonstration of our corruption. And he is fallen the lowest who thinks he is not fallen at all; for he who lives and acts as if he were not a fallen creature, must be farthest from recovery, and consequently must be most miserable. It is still rebellion to think to be happy in opposition to the revealed will of God; and every infidel, because he attempts this, is a rebel; he is a traitor convict; and every infidel society is an army of rebels united under the banner of their chief, who tempts, deludes, infatuates them, and hurries them on, sometimes even against conviction, until the long-suffering of God be wearied out with their rebellions, and he suffers them to fall into the hands of the enemy, who binds them with everlasting chains under darkness. Oh may the God of mercy open their eyes before they perish! Blessed Jesus, show them their guilt, and humble them under the sense of it; that, finding their misery, they may fly to thee for succour: for this is the usual method by which our Lord reclaims the unconverted and the infidel; as it follows in the Psalm: "Therefore he brought down their hearts with labour: they fell down, and there was none to help." He brought down their rebellious hearts by labour; he visited them with outward afflictions, under the weight of which they fell down, and there was none to help; they could not find any help upon earth; all worldly comforters failed them: and then they began to see their wretched condition. Their outward misery made them feel their inward. They found themselves in darkness, which no ray of science, nor the brightest beams of human learning, were able to dispel. They found themselves in the shadow of death; from the terrors of which all the moral and civil virtues put together could not deliver them. They found themselves fast bound in misery and iron; and all the powers in the earth could not break their chains. Finding their distress, and seeing no creature able to help, they were thereby disposed to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. And indeed, their proud hearts were so thoroughly brought down and abased, that they were led to cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. The Psalmist, in the 13th verse, makes this the happy effect of their affliction: it disposed them to seek God's favour; and he is always found of them who seek him. So soon as they cried unto

the Lord in their trouble, he was at hand to save them from their distresses. The almighty Saviour came and brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bonds in sunder. And thus he gave them complete redemption. Darkness fled at the approach of the eternal light, and the shadow of death was turned into the light of life at the appearance of the living God: and the bonds brake in sunder when Christ came and proclaimed liberty to them that were bound; and being thus enlightened and set free from the bonds of sin and Satan, and delivered from the shadow of death, after they have obtained so free and full a redemption, how can they be silent in the Redeemer's praise? They then have a lively sense of his redeeming love in their hearts; and it would be acting against their own sense and feeling if they made him no return of gratitude. It would be unnatural. Nay, it is indeed impossible for men to partake of the blessings of redemption, and not to be thankful to their Redeemer. "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders which he hath done for the salvation of men!" Wonders indeed! for he brought them from darkness to light, from the shadow of death to the life eternal, and from the bonds of misery to a crown of immortality. And shall they not praise him for these wonders? Shall they not speak with their tongues what their hearts feel? Doubtless they will be telling of his salvation all the day long; and, lest they should ever forget it, the Psalmist once more reminds them of their great deliverance: for he hath broken the gates of brass, says he, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. Remember from whence ye were redeemed, and be thankful. Were ye not in prison that was fortified with gates of brass and bars of iron; and were ye not chained down in the most dark and loathsome dungeon of this prison? Do you not recollect what horror you were in when you found yourselves in this distress, and had none upon earth to help you? And yet, you no sooner cried to Jesus for help, than he heard your cries, and came: he brake open the gates of brass, and snapped the bars of iron in sunder; your chains fell off; and he brought you out of the prison-house, and set you at liberty. And, certainly, you do not want to be persuaded to be thankful for such a deliverance, or to be grateful to such a deliverer! Your praises should flow with as much ease, and as naturally, as your breath. God grant the one may endure as long as the other, so that of his praises there may be no end.

I have now finished the paraphrase upon the words; and I come, 2ndly, to the spiritual use and application of them. The doctrine which they contain is this: Every son of Adam, in his natural state, before he is redeemed, is in darkness and the shadow of death, and is fast bound with the chains of sin and misery; and there is no help for him upon earth: the almighty God and Saviour alone is able to deliver him. This is the doctrine which I have supported from other passages of scripture, and from experience. And now, my brethren, let us examine ourselves upon it, and try to make it useful and profitable to our souls. The proper steps to this end seem to me, 1st, to believe the doctrine—2ndly, to desire to experience the truth of it—and 3rdly, to find the happy experience of it in our souls—and then we shall have reason indeed to be thankful.

And first—The belief of the doctrine is the chief point in the Christian religion: for we must be made sensible of our fallen state by nature before we can think of its being renewed by grace. The sick only want a physician: the sinner only wants a Saviour: and therefore we can have no motive to apply to him for his salvation until we find ourselves ruined and undone by sin: so that this must be first, and above all things, settled in our minds. The doctrine of our redemption stands upon our belief of the fall; and if man, in his fallen state, was not in darkness, then we want no Saviour to enlighten us: if he was not in the shadow of death, then we want no Saviour to deliver us from death: if he was not fast bound with chains by sin and Satan and death, then we want no Saviour to break our bonds asunder. We must first believe ourselves to be in these distresses, before we can seek for redemption. And therefore, my brethren, do you indeed believe that you are in your fallen state—in the distresses here described by the Psalmist—or do you not believe it? Do you see no darkness in the human mind? Do you know none who live in the fear of death?

And were you never tied to some favourite bosom-sin, which you found it harder to break off than it could be to break the strongest chains of iron? Certainly you must have remarked something of this kind. And if you have, how can you account for it otherwise than upon the Psalmist's principles? If mankind did not lose the divine light and life by sin, how came all this spiritual darkness into their minds? If they did not lose the love and favour of God by sin, how came they to be subject to death, and to live all their lives in fear of it? If they have not contracted a proneness to evil, how happens it to be so difficult to break the bonds of sin? No satisfactory account can be given of these things but what is taken from the scripture history of the fall; and therefore why should you not believe the scripture history? If you consult the infidels, they have nothing to offer upon these points; their advocates are silent. The heathens have written much, and reasoned more, upon the subject, but without success. Their best writers own that they were not able to clear it up. But upon the Christian plan, the difficulties vanish at once. The scripture account is rational and consistent. And why then, my brethren, do you not believe it? You have the word of God, and the voice of reason, and melancholy experience, attesting the depravity and corruption of mankind. You cannot deny but that they are depraved and corrupt. This is a self-evident truth. And what remedy is there for it? Can God look upon such sinful, polluted creatures with approbation? No: he cannot. The infinite purity of his nature will not suffer it. And he will not. He has declared, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and he who has once sinned can never make himself holy, and consequently he can never see the Lord; unless there be a Redeemer, who has holiness to give: for God's purity and sin's impurity set God and the sinner at an infinite distance. And how shall he ever approach to God unless there be a Redeemer who has infinite righteousness to impute to the sinner, and thereby enable him to draw near to God? Here is our only remedy. The Redeemer, and he alone, is able to repair all the evil effects of sin. Our souls must have remained for ever in darkness unless the divine rays of the Sun of righteousness had enlightened them. Our bodies would have lived here in the shadow of death unless the Redeemer had brought life and immortality to light. And both body and soul would have been bound with the chains of sin, here and for ever, unless our almighty Deliverer had set us at liberty. Oh let us receive him, then, for our Redeemer and our God! Finding and feeling our misery and distress without him, let there be raised in the heart a strong cry for his salvation. Let us imitate those in the text, who cried unto the Lord in their trouble. And this desire to experience his power to redeem us was the second head of application.

If you believe what has been said of your fallen state, and yet have no desire to be redeemed from it, how do you quiet your consciences as to this absurd conduct? You do believe that man is by nature sinful and miserable, and yet you have no desire to be redeemed from sin and misery. How inconsistent and contradictory is this proceeding! Do you choose, then, to be in darkness rather than light? Is death preferable to life, or bonds to liberty? O miserable deluded man, whom sin thus infatuates! whoever thou art, thou art self-condemned; because thou hast seen thyself fallen, and yet hast no desire to be raised up. By what arguments, what entreaties, shall I prevail with thee? How shall I touch thy heart, and win thy affections, to make thee desire what thou knowest already thou must desire, before thou canst be happy? Blessed Jesus! this is a work above my power. Take it, Lord, into thine own hand, and send thine almighty grace unto the hearts of all my hearers who are in this dreadful situation, that they may be disposed to seek pardon and peace of thee, with strong crying and tears, until thou save them from their distresses. Our Redeemer is a God of love: he cannot reject any person who seeks for his redemption. Seek, therefore, and ye shall find: desire, and your desires shall be granted: for they cried unto the Lord Jesus in their trouble—they only cried unto him, and he saved them out of their distresses. So will he save you, if you cry unto him for salvation. This is your encouragement: desire and pray until you happily experience his redeeming grace;—which is the third and last point I purposed to consider. The word experience, in these days of blasphemy and

reproach, conveys an odd idea to some persons; and I know that they cannot separate it from enthusiasm: but I have remarked that they who ridicule the word are entire strangers to the thing: for we mean nothing more by experience than the knowledge of what God has done for our souls, which may be as certainly perceived as any external object can be: for can faith be given, and the heart be changed, and all its affections altered—is it possible this should be done—and yet the man who suffers this great and total change should not know it? Can he be brought out of darkness into light, and not be sensible of it? Can he be delivered from the fear of death, and not find that his fears are gone? Can his bonds and chains be broken off, and shall he not feel that he is at liberty? Surely he must—he must know and feel it. He must have as clear an idea of it as a poor condemned prisoner would have of liberty, if he were brought out of the dark dungeon, and his chains and fetters knocked off. If you allow him to experience his deliverance, then you cannot deny the same experience to the redeemed of the Lord, whom he has brought out of darkness, and whose chains he has broken asunder. For, doubtless the soul may have its experience as well as the body; and the knowledge will be as certain in one case as in the other. And it highly concerns all formal nominal Christians; and I call upon them to observe this. And I would inquire of them, how they know that they have been redeemed, if they have had no experience of redemption? Will they pretend that they were born in a Christian country, and were baptized, and have lived ever since in the communion of some reformed church? Be it so. But all this entitles them no more to redemption than if they had been born among the Heathens or Mahometans; for a man born in England wants conversion as much as one born in Turkey: the same change of heart is necessary for both; and it is certain, being baptized does not change the heart; because, as children grow up, we see the seeds of vice sprouting up apace; and nothing can check them but being baptized with the Holy Ghost, of which water-baptism was the instituted emblem and figure: and whoever is baptized with the Holy Ghost, must as certainly experience the change it makes in him as he can see or feel any outward object. He was before in darkness; now he is in light: before, he was afraid of death; now his fears are gone: before, he was chained down in a loathsome prison; now he is at liberty. How can this be, and the man not know it? Is it possible to open the eyes of a blind man, and he not know it? Can he be restored to sight, and not see it? Certainly you cannot believe any thing so absurd; and yet you do believe a greater absurdity, if you think yourselves to be the redeemed of the Lord, and yet have experienced nothing of his redeeming power. Without this experience you are only nominal Christians; and I beseech you, my brethren, not to rest in the mere name of Christianity. If you have no knowledge of what Christ has done in your souls, you are only Christians in profession—you are Christians without any sense or feeling of Christianity—insensible Christians. What mere nothings are these in religion! You fancy you live to Christ, and yet you have no perception of this life! What can be more absurd? Therefore be not any longer content with the mere shadow of Christianity, nor think you have redemption, because you keep some of its outward services. These are well; but something more is necessary. God is to do the great work in your souls. It is all his. You can do nothing to it. You have only to desire and pray for his redemption. And his grace, which disposes you to desire and pray, will also do all the rest; for it is he who worketh in you, both to will and to do: therefore cry unto him until he work in you both to will and to do. If you cry, he will hear and answer: he will bring you from darkness to light, from the shadow of death to life eternal, and from the bonds of sin and Satan into the perfect liberty of the sons of God. And may the blessed Jesus give you the experience of these great changes, that you may find him almighty to perfect your redemption! and then you will be thankful. Sensible of your own misery by nature, and of the blessings of his free grace, you will not be silent in your Redeemer's praise. Your grateful hearts will overflow with expressions of thankfulness, and you will live eternally to him who now liveth in you. And so many as are in this happy state, who have tasted how good and gracious our Redeemer is, will now

draw near unto him, and send up their earnest request to him for his blessing upon what you have heard. And

We beseech thee, O most adorable God and Saviour! to make this discourse useful and profitable to our souls. We confess that we were by nature in darkness and in the shadow of death, and were fast bound with the chains of misery and sin. Thus low were we fallen, and there was none to help. But as soon as we cried unto thee, blessed Jesus! thou wast at hand to save, and didst deliver us from all our distresses. We praise and glorify thee for thy free and full redemption. And grant, O Lord, to this whole congregation the same happy experience. Send thy good Spirit into all their hearts, and so entirely change them from sin to righteousness, that they, finding thee to be also their Redeemer and their God, may join with us in praising thee for thy goodness, and in declaring the wonders which thou hast done for our salvation. O thou God of love! let no one leave this place without a blessing: but hear and answer according to the riches of thy mercy, to the glory of the Father and of the eternal Spirit, three persons of equal power, majesty, and dominion; to whom be ascribed equal honour and worship, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON V.

Psalm cvii. 17—23.

Fools because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

The subject of this Psalm is thanksgiving: the motives by which the Holy Spirit tries to stir us up to be thankful are taken from redemption; which is the greatest mercy God has bestowed upon mankind, and therefore it justly demands the greatest thankfulness. But because the all-wise Inspirer of this divine hymn knew the abominable corruption of our hearts, and that we were by nature unholy and unthankful, he has therefore used several arguments to convince us. He is earnest and importunate with us. He calls aloud to us again and again, solicits, presses us, to open our eyes, and to behold the wonders which God hath done for our redemption. And to give an edge to these repeated entreaties, and to make them pierce the deeper, he has adorned them with the ornaments of language and the graces of sentiment. The very composition has every thing beautiful and sublime that can recommend it to our esteem; and he who knows the heart, and what is most likely to make an impression upon it, has still farther heightened the subject by four paintings from nature, which he has drawn in the most lively and striking colours. The design of each of these pieces is to represent our fallen state in the most affecting point of view; that seeing and feeling the exquisite distress of it, we may be induced to cry unto the Lord Jesus for deliverance, who never shutteth out the cry of the poor destitute, but hears and comes, with all the haste that almighty love can make, to deliver and to save. The subject of the first painting is laid in a wilderness: fallen man is like a traveller, lost and bewildered in a desert, weary and faint, and ready to perish with famine. In the second piece, his distress increases; for he falls into a pit of darkness and the shadow of death, where the enemy finds him, and puts him in chains, binding him with misery and iron. In the third, which we are going to view at present, you will see him laying in a scene of still greater distress. Behold him here, quite worn down by sickness. See how pale and feeble and emaciated he looks—his strength gone—his appetite

lost—his breath failing—he draws near to the gates of death. This is the affecting scene on which we are now to fix our eyes. And I hope you will attend to the Psalmist's account of the causes and symptoms of our disorders, of the proper remedy, and of the means to avoid diseases for the future. I know you all value health: nothing is dearer to you: for without it life itself is a burden; therefore hear what the Psalmist has to offer upon these points; and let this awaken your closest attention, that he does not borrow his rules from books, or from the experience of the ablest physicians, but he received them from the author of our being. The all-wise God revealed them to him, and through him to us: and may he guide our hearts, that we may receive by his grace all that profit from this scripture which he intended it should be the means of administering to the faithful. May his good Spirit sanctify our hearts while we are viewing the three chief parts of this highly-finished painting.

First, The distress of the sick.

Secondly, Their cure by the great physician. And,

Thirdly, Their grateful behaviour to him.

As to the first particular, the cause of their sickness is thus described: "Foolish men, by a course of sin and wickedness, are afflicted and brought low." Sin was the fruitful parent of all their disorders; and though they knew it, though they saw daily sad experience of it, yet they were such fools as still to sin on, and to persevere obstinately at the expense of their own health and life. What a strong delusion was this! They found themselves weakened and enfeebled, quite worn down with labouring in the ways of sin, and yet they were so infatuated as to persist. Might not the Psalmist with good reason call such men fools? What could be greater folly than to continue in a habit of sinning until it had brought them so low "that their soul abhorred all manner of meat, and they drew nigh to the gates of death?" A course of sin was the cause of their disorder; and in these words the Psalmist gives us the dangerous symptoms of it: food is necessary to our being; the desire of it is a natural appetite; but when nature loses the desire for that which is necessary to its very being, it must be then greatly disordered. The stomach must have been much injured, and the organs dangerously impaired; indeed the whole body must be in a very bad habit, before all appetite could be lost. But how much more dangerous are the symptoms when nature does not only cease to desire, but cannot even bear the most innocent food? When the stomach is become so weak and tender, that it cannot digest the lightest meat, the case is then growing desperate, and there seems to be no hopes left when it comes to the last stage here described; *viz.* to loathe and abhor all manner of meat. The stomach turns at the sight of it. And the man has this loathing and abhorrence of all manner of meat. What he most loved, and had the best appetite for, is now become so very offensive, that, at the smell of it, he grows sick, and faints away. Nature cannot support itself long under this disorder. If this loss of appetite and loathing even the smell of the most simple food continue, it must wear the patient out: indeed it is not always a mortal distemper; there may be an entire loathing of food, and even fainting away at the smell of it, and the patient may sometimes recover. But in the present case, the distemper had continued so long, and was grown so inveterate, that there were no hopes, for they draw nigh, the Psalmist says, to the gates of death—these gates of brass, and bars of iron, with which death locks up his prisoners in the grave; and you may judge how great must be the strength of these gates and bars, since only one person was ever able to break through them; and if he had not been more than man, he could never have broken these gates of brass, nor cut these bars of iron in sunder.

This is the striking image in the text; and in order to see it in the most affecting point of view, you should visit a person in this distress. Go to his sick-bed, and behold him in this languishing condition; lying weak and feeble, and wearing away apace through loss of appetite: you see all the organs of the body, for want of natural supplies, begin to be unable to perform their proper offices. And as the bodily strength decays, the faculties of the mind also are impaired: his memory is short: he is scarcely able to distinguish one object from another. If you continue for some time by his bedside, and examine all the symptoms of

his disorder, it must greatly move your compassion to see him in such pain and misery. You cannot but feel tenderly for him; and the more if you recollect that this case may soon be your own. And if you thus bring it home, and apply it to yourselves, it may be natural to give a vent to your pity, and to shed one compassionate tear over your distressed fellow-creature. But if the person who is in this disorder should happen to be dear to you—a relation, a friend, as near as the wife of your bosom—you could not behold them in these agonies without suffering along with them. And I ask every tender, humane person among you, whether he does not think sorrow would become him on such an occasion? You see how naturally tears flow at the sight of a painted scene in a deep tragedy; and what, then, would the world say of a husband who could see his wife languishing under the loss of appetite, and yet stand by her unconcerned, even after the physician had pronounced her case desperate? A man of the least compassion would be greatly affected; and I appeal to every one of you, whether you would not approve of his tender concern for so dear and intimate a relation. I know you would think yourselves inhuman and brutish if you felt no sentiments of pity for the sufferings of your bosom friend. And

What can be dearer to you than your own souls? Have pity therefore upon yourselves; for you are the men. This is your own picture, painted from nature, and by the eternal Spirit of God. You are these very persons labouring under this loss of appetite. Every one of you, by the fall, is in this dreadful case. Oh! therefore, turn your compassion upon yourselves, and if the sight of the bodily disease in others made you suffer, let your suffering be doubled at the sight of your own inward disease. Can you mourn over these outward maladies, and can you spare no tears for your poor distempered souls? Shall they be sick unto death, and shall not the bowels of your compassion be moved?

But you do not find them sick: you feel no pains for the loss of appetite. This is the worst symptom: for sin, which was the cause of the disorder, has now deluded you into the last stage of it. You are dying; and yet the delusion of sin is so strong, that you have no concern for your own death, your eternal death. Oh, my brethren, for the love of God, and all that is dear and valuable to you in time and eternity, rouse up your tenderness and pity. The Lord grant you may shake off this spiritual lethargy, which makes you so insensible of the distressed state of your souls. May he awaken you from the dead sleep of sin, and open your eyes to see your danger: for indeed we are all in this distress. Sin has robbed us of all appetite for our spiritual food. We have no desire, no relish for it; nay, while we continue in sin, we abhor it, we loathe it, our stomachs turn against it, and we cannot help showing our resentment against them who persuade us, and earnestly entreat us to take it, and live.

That all men are by nature in this situation, whether they see it or not, will be proved in the sequel: indeed, it is plain enough from the text; for the Psalmist teaches us that sin is the cause of this disorder; consequently, all who have sinned must be thus disordered: and are we not all sinners? and are not these sinners in the greatest danger who do not see that sin has brought them into this disorder? for, by not feeling their distress, they have no motive to cry out for help: but if it should please God to open their eyes, and to show them their spiritual malady, at the very sight of their extreme danger they would be moved to implore deliverance. And the first sigh that comes from an awakened heart pierces the ears of our gracious God: the Lord Jesus hears it, and he comes with all the haste almighty love can make to answer it: for it follows, in the 19th verse, "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses:" as soon as they cried for salvation, the great physician was sent to save them—"Jehovah sent his word and healed them, and they were delivered from their destructions." His word, who healed them, was his essential word—even the second person in the Godhead, our Lord Jesus Christ—the word who was made flesh and dwelt among us: of this divine word it was foretold, in the Old Testament, that he should arise with the glory of the morning sun, bringing healing in his wings for all our maladies: and accordingly the New Testament relates that Jesus went about all Galilee, preaching the gospel of the

kingdom, and healing ALL manner of sickness, and ALL manner of disease among the people. He healed the bodily diseases miraculously, to prove that he was the almighty physician of the soul. And it is remarkable that he never rejected any person who applied to him for an outward cure, to demonstrate to us that he would never cast out any person who should apply to him for a spiritual cure. You hear, in the text, that so soon as they cried to him, he was at hand to save, and they had happy experience of the Psalmist's description of him —"He giveth them medicine to heal their sickness"—He gave them a medicine which presently restored to them a good appetite. He sent his divine grace into their hearts, which took off their loathing and abhorrence of food, and then raised in them a hungering and thirsting after Christ's righteousness: and this appetite for it will always be satisfied; for blessed are they, says the almighty physician himself, blessed are they that hunger now, for they shall be filled; they shall have more grace, who have a spiritual appetite, a hungering for more; they shall be even filled with grace: for he hath filled the hungry with good things, with grace to justify, and with grace to sanctify: these are good things including every thing that is good, short of glory.

And after the free love and mercy of our most adorable physician has raised us from the death of sin, and given us a new life, with new faculties and new appetites, and our spiritual food is now grown pleasant and desirable to our souls, so that we taste it and relish it with joy; how, then, can we forbear breaking out into his praises who has been so exceedingly gracious unto us? We cannot refrain. It would be offering violence in us to enjoin silence. We must be telling of what our dearest Lord has done for our recovery; and sorry we are from our hearts that we cannot honour him as we could wish. Our best oblations, our highest praises, what are they? How poor and unworthy a return for his inestimable love! But thou hast required them, blessed Jesus; and we present them before thee, knowing that we stand in need of thy merits to pardon our imperfect praises. Oh make them such as God the Father may accept: for we now praise thee for thy goodness, and we declare to all the world that thou hast done wonders of mercy for our salvation. And when the prophet inquired, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits done unto me?" he was led by the Holy Spirit to make this resolution: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord:" he went to the blessed sacrament, there to offer his sacrifice of thanksgiving; and there the Holy Spirit directs the redeemed of the Lord to go, in the last verse of the text: "And they sacrificed the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declared his works with rejoicing." This was the sacrifice of the Eucharist, to which the persons who have been healed of their spiritual maladies go, in grateful remembrance of the numerous and endless blessings derived to them from the body and blood of Jesus Christ; of which the sacrifices of thanksgiving under the law were expressive memorials: for at every such sacrifice the blood of some pure, clean animal was shed, and there were offered with it unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and the flesh of the sacrifice was to be eaten the same day it was offered. In like manner, at our sacrifice of thanksgiving, where these figures are realized, we have the sacramental blood of the most clean and unspotted Lamb of God, with which we have bread that is verily and indeed the flesh of Christ to the faithful, when it is, like these wafers and cakes, anointed with the holy unction of the blessed Spirit. When he accompanies the outward elements with his divine grace and blessing, than we partake of the body and blood of Christ: and his body is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed —the only meat and drink which can support the soul: for without them we have no life, no spiritual divine life, abiding in us. And after Christ has healed our infirmities, and restored our lost appetite, where should we go for food but to our Lord's table? Where can we receive, but from his body and blood, support to our souls, and growth in grace? He has instituted these outward signs to signify his inward grace, and has assured us that he will do the same thing to the soul which the elements do to the body. Upon this promise the redeemed rest. They go to the holy sacrament, both to offer their sacrifices of thanksgiving for what their Saviour hath done for their souls, and also to receive fresh

pledges of his love and bounty. And whoever approaches the Lord's table with this faith, will always find occasion, when he comes from it, to declare the works of Christ with rejoicing. God grant this whole scripture may be fulfilled in every one who hears me, that, seeing your natural sickness by sin, you may be disposed to fly to the great physician, and may receive such a perfect cure, that his praises may be your delight and joy for ever and ever.

I have now gone through the paraphrase upon the words. You have heard the sense and meaning of them laid open. They contain a most affecting image of the misery and distress of our fallen nature, which we will briefly review by way of spiritual application in these three particulars, under which it was before considered in the paraphrase.

First, The distress of the sick.

Secondly, Their cure by the great physician. And,

Thirdly, Their grateful behaviour to him.

And first, As to the distress of the sick, you have seen it drawn by the Holy Spirit in the strongest colours: and his painting has a universal likeness. It does not represent this or that man, but every man; every son of fallen Adam is here painted to the life: for before he is redeemed, he lies languishing and pining away in a course of sin: his soul is in such a bad habit as his body is in when it has lost all appetite for food; and not only does not desire it, but even loathes it, and continues in this weak feeble condition until it draws near to the gates of death. Now, Christ is the only support and food of the sinful soul; and yet it has no appetite for him; not only does not desire him, but even loathes and abhors him, while it is drawing near to the gates of death; and it will be the Lord's mercy if the gates be not soon shut upon it.

And now, my brethren, let me bring this point home to you. Do you indeed believe that this is a true picture of human nature, and of every one of you in your sinful state, before you have redemption through faith in the blood of Jesus? The Holy Spirit who drew it, declares it is. And why should you not believe him? for it is founded upon a plain matter of fact, which you cannot deny; and that is, the universal corruption of mankind. If they be all sinners by nature, which is as certain as that they are men by nature, then they are all sick, and this picture is a true likeness of them all: for sin brings the soul low, and weakens its faculties, as sickness does the body and its faculties: and as sickness takes away the appetite of the body, and creates an aversion to food, so does sin take away the appetite of the soul, and creates an aversion to its food. This is plain matter of fact; and it is scripture too: for sin is the cause of this spiritual malady, and, since all men have sinned, all men therefore are spiritually diseased with the pains and miseries of sin. And there is no remedy upon earth, no human means, either by simple repentance or by morality, to heal this dangerous sickness. The divine and almighty physician is the only healer of the nations; but the moralist and the infidel want him not—the whole want no physician, but they that are sick: but they who see and feel the evil effects of sin earnestly seek and implore his help; and for them he has healing in his wings, as the Evangelist has remarked—"Jesus healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." And when took he our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses? Was it not when he bare our sins in his own body upon the tree? For by his stripes we are healed. When he took away our sins, he then had power to heal us, and consequently, if he had not taken our sins away, we could not have been healed; but we must have remained in the foul leprosy of our transgressions, and in such a like condition as the prophet Isaiah has described: "Ah! sinful nation! a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children of corrupters—the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint—from the sole of the foot, even unto the head; there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." This is a true description of all sinful people, and of every sinner in particular. And the image is just and expressive, if you apply to the soul what is here said of the body? for sin makes the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint. Sin disorders all the faculties of the soul, so that, from the sole of the foot even unto

the head, there is no soundness: they are all corrupt: and the corruption will as certainly end in the destruction of the soul as a like total corruption in the body would end in its destruction.

But I have heard persons inquiring how can this be? Can I be thus sick, even unto death, and not know it, and not feel it? Most undoubtedly you may. Your case may be dangerous, even desperate, and yet you may have no sense of it: for this is a spiritual disease, and the cause of it is sin, and every sin obscures and blinds the eyes of the soul, and makes its other senses gross and thick, and a habit of sin deadens them entirely—what St. Paul, speaking of the unregenerate, calls being past all feeling. So that you may be sick unto death, and yet be past all feeling. The body in the meanwhile may be in health, and the soul may be dying. The body may be as strong as Samson, and yet the poor soul may be languishing and fainting, and drawing near to the gates of death; and it is the nearer the less apprehensive you are of it. If sin has so blinded and deluded you, that you neither see your guilt nor feel your danger, your case I pronounce to be at present desperate. You stand on the precipice. You are on the very brink of ruin: one step more, and behold, the pit is open. You fall. You are lost for ever. Eternal destruction is your portion. Men and brethren, take warning. I entreat you by the tender mercies of our Lord Jesus Christ to stop and to consider your case. Unless you are in love with pain and misery, be persuaded to request of our God to open your eyes. Let me beg of you (for I see your extreme danger), and out of love to your souls I importune you, to desire God to show your true state. And will you not vouchsafe to send up one desire to him for yourselves? But are you fully determined to keep your eyes shut against your danger, and to go on in your sins? Would to God I knew the proper motives to awaken your consciences, and to make you sensible that your sickness is unto death! If I did, you should not sleep a moment longer upon the brink of eternal destruction: for there indeed you lie, whether you see your danger or not. And can none of my exhortations, none of my friendly entreaties, prevail with you to rouse up and to look into your own hearts, and to examine your state and condition? Cannot I prevail? If you still turn a deaf ear to me, O blessed Jesus, I will then turn to thee. Thou God of love, send thy good Spirit upon every person here present, on whom my arguments have made no impression, and show them the dangerous malady of sin; that, feeling the pain and misery of it, there may be raised in their hearts a strong cry for thy salvation. And may our most adorable God now work in you this happy change, that you may be disposed to apply for your cure to the great physician of souls;—

Which is the second remark. You have heard how he treated the sick persons in the text. So soon as they cried to him for help, he came, and, by a remedy which never failed, restored them to perfect health: and he treats all his patients with the same love and mercy: he only waits till they be made to see their misery and to cry unto him for deliverance: and if it be but one deep sigh, but one short prayer—"Lord Jesus, be merciful unto me a sinner!"—if it come from the heart, he will be merciful: for his readiness to relieve the distressed is the second part of this beautiful painting—"Then they cried unto the Lord," says the Psalmist, "in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distresses—he sent his word and healed them." The Lord Jesus himself came. The great healer of the nations heard their cries; the bowels of his compassion were moved at the sight of their misery, and that tender heart, which bled for them on the cross, now melted into pity; for he desireth not the death of sinners, but rather that they should repent and live. He died to give them life; and, now they are asking for it, how can he refuse it? Can he who came down from heaven, and left his eternal throne, and laid aside his divine glory for a time—can he who went through the world poor and despised, hungry and thirsty, and weary—can he be without love? Did not he submit to this low abasement, and to these miseries, in order that he might be the sovereign physician of sinners? And now he has laid them prostrate at his feet, humbly imploring his free grace to raise them up, is it not impossible that he should deny to heal them? The crucified Saviour cannot want love; the almighty God cannot want power; and therefore, whosoever cometh unto him for cure he will in nowise cast out.

Such is Jesus, our most adorable physician: and are you not in love with his amiable character? How should it endear him to us that he is always disposed freely to heal, and that there is no spiritual disease so dangerous and inveterate but he has skill to heal it, nor any so offensive or odious in his sight but he has mercy to heal it? He neither wants will nor power. And can you believe this? Are you verily persuaded that the God of love is ready to heal you of all your maladies? And will you not come to him for a cure? When the blessed Jesus invites, when he presses you to accept health and salvation at his hands, what can tempt you to reject his gracious offer? I now stand up in his name, and by his authority now proclaim these tidings of great joy—"I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely." These are our Lord's own words in the prophet Hosea, xiv. 4. And because he loves sinners freely, therefore he heals them freely. He requires no previous condition, but that they see and feel their sickness; and this he makes them sensible of, and then his free grace restores them to perfect health. And to such a physician who would not apply? To a physician who is almighty to heal, and whose love refuses none that apply to him, be they ever so sick and sinful—and who does all this freely. Free grace is his only motive. And upon hearing of such a physician, and knowing that you are sinners and want his help, will any of you think of leaving the church, without applying to him for relief? God forbid. I hope none of you will be such enemies to yourselves. What! will you prefer sickness to health, and pain to pleasure? Can you be thus infatuated by sin? Is there any of you still under this strong delusion? If you are, may the almighty physician take your case into his own hands, and out of his infinite love and compassion first dispose you to seek health from him, and then freely bestow it upon you. Blessed Jesus! let thy divine power be now present to heal every one of us, that we may all join in giving thanks and glory to thy name; which is the Psalmist's third remark in the text.

I shall speak very briefly to this particular, because it concerns only those persons who have experienced the skill of the great physician. They alone are here called upon to offer their sacrifice of thanksgiving. None can be thankful to Christ but they who have tasted of his redeeming love; because thankfulness arises from our sense of his mercy. We must first cry unto him to save us from the mortal disease of sin, and afterwards have received salvation, before our minds are rightly disposed to be thankful. And when the almighty healer has thus graciously restored us, we can no more, with this experience of his love, refrain from his praises than we can refrain from breathing: the redeemed of the Lord praise him as freely as they breathe: for praise is as much the breath of a redeemed soul, as air is of his body. The redeemed cannot be silent. It is their delight and joy; and they are never more happy than when they are praising the Lord Jesus for his goodness, and declaring the wonders which he hath done for their salvation. Oh may the number of the redeemed of the Lord increase daily! May the honour and praise of our almighty physician spread and be celebrated with more tongues and with more grateful hearts! O thou sovereign healer of every sinful malady, let thy fame be more known in the earth, and thy saving health among all nations. Manifest thy power to heal all the diseases of sin; but more especially manifest it to this congregation. O thou God of love, let thy power now be present to heal. We call upon thee, blessed Jesus, we earnestly entreat thee, to hear us, and grant that no one person may leave this place until they either desire to find, or do indeed find, that thou art a most loving God, almighty to heal the greatest of sinners: and for these our prayers we desire acceptance through thine infinite merits, that thou mayst answer them to the glory of God the Father, and to the honour of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity in unity, whom we worship and adore, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON VI.

Psalm cvii. 23—33.

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven: they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted, because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

The Psalmist, in this divine hymn, calls upon us to be thankful for the blessings of redemption; and in order to inspire us with the greater thankfulness, he sets before us a perfect representation of man's misery before he is redeemed. The three first parts of this sacred painting have been already considered. We have seen that man, in his natural fallen state, is as much at a loss to find out the way to heaven as a traveller would be in some vast desert, where he is quite lost and ready to perish. He is as much unable to walk in the way, even if he were directed aright; being fast bound with the chains of sin, as a prisoner would be, who is shut up in a dungeon, and there bound with misery and iron. And if his chains were knocked off, and the prison-doors thrown open, yet he is in such a weak, languishing condition, that he cannot stir one step. He has so weakened and impaired his faculties by a course of sin, which has brought on him a total loss of appetite, and has so worn him away, that he is now near to the gates of death. These are the three beautiful images, under which the Holy Spirit has drawn the picture of our fallen nature. The fourth, which puts a finishing hand to the performance, is contained in the words now read; wherein our distress is still heightened, and our danger is painted in more strong colouring. The subject of this last piece is a storm at sea: and I believe there is not in the universe an object more great and striking; nor is it possible to represent it in words more clear, or in descriptions more affecting, than what the Holy Spirit has here used. May he dispose your hearts to receive the instruction which they hold out to you, that every one of you may reap the profit from them, for which he inspired them and left them upon record. And to this end you will look up to him for his grace and blessing, while I am,

First, Laying before you a paraphrase upon the words; and then,

Secondly, Applying the doctrine contained in them to your spiritual benefit and improvement. And,

First, The Holy Spirit has here given us the representation of a storm at sea; which is so expressive and sublime, that the bare reading of it is sufficient to humble the pride of human genius. If one of the best heathen poets had undertaken to write upon the subject, he would probably have given us a volume upon it: whereas this sacred drawing, though it be short, is nevertheless absolutely complete. The description rises up to the greatness of the subject, and every circumstance, in the order it is mentioned, heightens what went before, and makes the whole so full and perfect, that they who have been in a storm at sea, and in danger of being cast away, cannot but tremble at this relation of it. "They who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters; these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." We see his wonders everywhere: the creation is full of them. In every place, in every condition of life, we may behold evident marks of almighty power and infinite wisdom; but they who live a seafaring life have more evident marks than

any other persons; for they see the most wonderful display of the divine attributes. Upon the land, we can scarce form an idea of what they feel and endure at sea, when, at the word of God, "the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof." The accidents of the storm, and the causes on which they depend, are here so justly represented, that it is not possible to see a more affecting picture. You may here behold distinctly, and in beautiful order, the command of God—the action of the wind—the rage of the waves—and the distress of the mariners. God commands the wind to arise—the wind raises and lifts up the waves of the sea—the waves beat furiously against the vessel—put her in danger—and this danger raises another tempest in the souls of the poor mariners. In this chain of causes and effects God holds the first place; for he commandeth the stormy wind, and then the wind lifteth the waves of the deep. Although the wind be nothing but air in motion, yet there is no agent in nature capable of acting with greater force and violence. The sea, in a perfect calm, appears to be one beautiful and even plain, smooth as the polished marble; but the wind no sooner begins to blow, than it is ruffled and agitated. And when it blows with might and fury, it tosses up the waves, and beats them one against another with such impetuosity, that the noise is incessant, and as loud as thunder. And then, heaping wave upon wave, they here swell into lofty mountains, and there sink down into deep and horrible valleys. The natural weight of the water carries it down, and the violence of the storm raises it up; and by the opposition of these two jarring elements there is formed the most dreadful conflict which is to be seen in the universe; even on the shore, where you are safe, yet you cannot behold it without horror. But what must be their situation who are in the midst of the storm, and over whose heads the raging billows are breaking every moment! How great must be their distress when they find their vessel become the sport of the winds and waves, and sometimes carried up to heaven, up high into the air, and presently down again into the deep! And to give us a strong image of the confusion of the mariners, the Holy Spirit adds, that they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, tossed from one side to the other, thrown up and down, and reeling about, as unable to walk upright in the ship, as a drunken man is upon the land. In this distress they find the rudder, and the sails, and the oars, of no use. The fury of the wind and storm carry the vessel where they please, and the waves, beating against her with all their might, in different parts, and in different directions, shake her strongest timbers, and make such wide leaks, into which the sea comes pouring in, that the affrighted mariners are at their wits' end. All their wisdom is swallowed up. The light of reason cannot suggest to them any expedient, or if it could, yet the strength and arm of flesh are not able to carry it into execution. All hope of being saved is now taken away, and their souls are in the utmost fear and dread, and melt away because of the trouble, as it is here expressed—no stability is left, no courage remains. Their minds are agitated like the ocean, and in as much confusion: for besides the loss of the vessel, and of the goods, on which they set but too great a value, they can turn their eyes no way, but they see the waves ready to swallow them up, and death awaiting them on every side. No desired shore, no favourable haven appears. On earth there is no prospect of deliverance.

This is a short sketch of the Holy Spirit's description, which, how briefly soever I may have represented it, is nevertheless perfectly expressive and sublime in itself, and will appear more so to them who have seen a storm in its highest rage and fury: for if you have never seen one, you can form but very faint ideas of it. I judge thus from my own experience: for I have seen many storms from the shore, and thought I could have given a good description of them; but when I was afterwards really in one, and in danger, I then found that my former knowledge was very imperfect. To be in a storm at sea is as different from seeing it from the shore, as a painted storm differs from a real one. It felt very differently to me from what it had ever done before, when I was in the midst of the waves, and was tossed up to heaven, and then down again to the deep. The sea ran so high that I well remember, when our ship was down in the deep, between two waves, I could not see the top of the mast of a large vessel which came very near

us during the storm. You may judge what a situation we were then in. I believe the stoutest heart among you would have trembled upon this occasion. If you would know how you should have behaved, put yourselves in the same situation we were in. Suppose yourselves to have been several days in a troubled sea, tossed with winds and tempests, and at last all hopes of being saved began to fail. What do you think would be your sentiments, if the storm should still continue, the vessel should grow leaky and ready to sink, and instant death was before your eyes? If you could really suppose yourselves to be in this situation, you would want none of my arguments to persuade you to seek help from God in such a time of need. Would not you pray, and entreat him with strong crying and tears to come to your assistance? Oh with what earnestness would your souls implore and beg him to stretch out his merciful hand, and save you from perishing! Let there, then, be raised in your hearts the same strong crying and tears that you may be delivered from a more dreadful storm than what we have been considering. This tempest in the natural world is but a faint image of a much greater which sin has occasioned in the spiritual world. The one is but a painted storm compared to the other. And to this more terrible storm you are all subject. Every son of Adam, being a sinner, is embarked on a troubled sea, where the winds and waves are contrary: for it must be remembered, that this description cannot be peculiar to sailors, because the whole Psalm is spiritual; it belongs to the redeemed of the Lord; and all his redeemed people do not literally go down to the sea in ships, nor do they meet with storms from the rage of winds and waves; and yet they are all called upon to be thankful for being delivered from some storm; consequently they were all in this storm before they were redeemed, and they were thrown into it by the same cause which made them lose themselves in the wilderness—fall into the pit—sicken and pine away for want of appetite. Sin was the fruitful parent of all these miseries. And the storm which sin raises in the soul is a spiritual tempest, of which the natural is a picture. The Holy Spirit intended the one should be a natural representation of the other. He gave us the outward image, that we might in it see the likeness of an inward storm. And he himself, in his own word, has applied the outward image to represent these inward objects, and therefore we have his own infallible application of the text, wherein he supposes us all to be embarked upon a voyage to the haven of eternal rest. And we sailed thither on a smooth unruffled sea until sin entered into the world, and raised the winds, and made the waves beat against us, and a furious storm darkened the face of the sky, and hid the desired haven from our sight. And here the Holy Spirit begins his description: "They who go down to the sea, into the ever moving, busy, agitated world, which sin has made like the troubled sea, "in ships," in worldly societies, opposed to the ark of the church, which is but one, "and do business in great waters," and are occupied in worldly business among the crowd, and in the bustle of worldly men; "these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep:"—they see a full display of his wonderful works in his manner of bringing these worldly people into distress: for he commandeth; all afflictions come by his order and appointment; this especially, which raiseth the stormy wind, which moveth the spirit of the world to oppose its own people, and lifteth up the waves thereof to distress them. Worldly men meet with a sea of troubles; for the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest: waves after waves beat against them, and swell and lift up themselves still higher and higher, until the raging billows break over their heads. And when these afflictions come, they are so distressed, their minds are so tossed and agitated, that they can find no rest. Sometimes they mount up to heaven, carried up and swoln with spiritual pride; then again they go down to the depths, sunk with distrust and despair—their soul melteth away, and has no stability or courage left, because of the trouble. The trouble is so great, that the light of reason is put out. The boasted moral sense refuses to take the helm, and the rectitude and dignity of human nature dare not direct. The religion of nature, and the fitness of things, aided with all the graces and ornaments of the arts and sciences, and set off with the lustre of classical learning, cannot hinder

them from reeling to and fro, and staggering like a drunken man. Nay, with all these learned and polite accomplishments, they are at their wits' end, quite unable to find out any expedient to extricate them from their distress.

This is a true picture of man in his natural state. It is drawn by the Spirit of God, and is the likeness of every son of Adam; for sin has thrown them upon this boisterous sea, and raised this furious storm against them, and the spirit of the world and the devil keep it up in all its fury, and drive its mighty billows over their heads. And they can do nothing to escape perishing in the deep waters. Nothing but death is before them. Oh may the God of mercy open your eyes to see your danger, that finding no help upon earth, you may be disposed to look up to him, from whom alone can your salvation come! And being thus disposed, then you will follow them in the text—"who cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses."

This is the second part of the beautiful painting in the text. Happy was the affliction which made them seek help from God: for while the world smiled on them, they were apt to forget heaven. But when affliction pressed sore upon them, and no human relief offered, the most stupid and hardened sinners were then ready to ask relief from God, and to seek him in their distress, although they had forgotten and despised him in their prosperity. But no affliction works this happy effect more certainly than the dangers of the sea, which are so great, and in a storm so far out of the reach of any succour, that there are very few, in such a case, who do not cry unto God for help. And hence comes the common saying—"that they who know not how to pray should go to sea to learn." A storm is an excellent teacher: it forces men to pray; it makes the most profane and irreligious look up to heaven; and if they once look up with the prayer of the heart, our God, out of his infinite love, immediately hears and answers. "Call upon me," says he, "in the day of trouble; so will I hear thee. And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Thus prayer engages the Almighty on their side, and then nothing is impossible to it. Prayer commands the elements—changes the seasons—stops the sun in its course—quenches the violence of fire—and calms the most tempestuous sea. You saw these poor mariners in distress: they had exerted all their skill, and toiled so long as their strength lasted, but to no purpose; the storm still raged, and grew more violent; so that, all efforts being in vain, they give up their vessel to the fury of the winds and waves, and then, at last, betake themselves to their prayers: and the prayer of faith did for them what the united skill and strength of all the men in the world could never have effected. It calmed the wind, it quieted the waves, it smoothed the sea, and carried the shattered vessel safe to the desired haven: for upon their crying to him, "he maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still: then are they glad, because they be quiet; and so he bringeth them unto their desired haven." And this deliverance is to them a matter of great gladness: the past danger enhances the present safety; the storm which they have escaped now increases their enjoyment of the desired haven: for, it is certain, we relish prosperity better after adversity, peace after war, and health after sickness. A calm is never so pleasant as after a storm. And while we are tasting the pleasures of it, how can we avoid acknowledging our deliverance with gratitude?

This is the third part of the painting in the text. So soon as these mariners are delivered, they instantly offer up their sacrifice of thanksgiving: "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!" The wonders which he had wrought deserved their best thanks, not only in private, but also in public; not only in the closet, but also in the great congregation. And the Holy Spirit, in the last words, calls upon them to exalt their deliverer in the congregation of the people, and to praise him in the assembly of the elders, (that is, openly, in the face of the church,) and if they should neglect this, I appeal unto you all, whether such ungrateful wretches did not deserve to have perished unregarded in the storm.

I have now considered the paraphrase upon the words, and have set before you the lively painting of our natural state, which they contain: and I come, secondly, to the spiritual use and application of them.

The image is this. Mankind, before they are redeemed, are like a ship in a stormy sea, agitated with passions, tossed up and down with cares, and so blown about with various temptations, that they are never at rest. This is their calmest state in the smiling day of smooth prosperity: but afflictions will come, the afflictions of sin, and Satan, and the world, will raise a violent storm, which all the wit and strength of man cannot escape. He will soon be swallowed up of the devouring waves unless that same God who created the sea, speak to it—"Peace; be still." We are all in the same situation the apostles were when they were alone, in the evening, in the midst of the sea, and the wind and the waves were contrary; against which they toiled, rowing in vain, until Christ came to them, walking upon the sea, and commanded the winds to cease, and the waves to be still. Upon which, there was a great calm: for they knew his voice who had spoken them into being, and they obeyed. His word is almighty to compose and still the raging war of the most furious elements. And he is as almighty in the spiritual world as he is in the natural. Into whatever soul he enters, he commands all the jarring passions to be still, and there is indeed a blessed calm. Oh may the almighty Saviour speak thus unto you all, that you may sail on a smooth unruffled sea until you arrive safe at the desired haven of eternal rest!

And now, my brethren, after what has been said in this and the preceding lectures of man's fallen state, let me ask what opinion you entertain of it? Do you really think that the image which the Holy Spirit has set before you this day is true, and drawn from nature? Do you indeed believe that sin has thrown you upon the wide and furious ocean, that the spirit of the world and the devil have raised a tempest against you, that you are every moment in danger of being swallowed up by the merciless waves, and that there is no deliverer, in heaven or earth, but the Lord Jesus? If you do not believe this truth, upon what principles do you deny it? Not upon scripture principles; for it is very common in scripture to describe the sinful state of man under this image. The book of Psalms is full of it. In the 18th, Christ, complaining of his enemies, says, "The floods of ungodly men made me afraid; but God took me: he drew me out of many waters; he delivered me from my strong enemies." Here the many waters and the strong enemies stand for the same persons. The 69th Psalm begins thus: "Save me, O God! for the waters are come in unto my soul. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me;" and then, in the 14th verse, Christ prays for deliverance in these words: "Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters." The same ungodly men who hated him are also called deep waters. He prays again, in the 144th Psalm, verse 7: "Send thine hand from above; rid me and deliver me out of the great waters, and from the hand of strange children." And these strange children are compared to troubled waters throughout the prophets, and even to the end of the New Testament. St. James likens the inconstant wavering man to a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed; and St. Jude calls the ungodly infidels, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame. And St. John, in the 17th chapter of the Revelation, has given us a key to open all these scriptures: he was shown, in a vision, the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: and in the 15th verse, the angel explains the vision, and says, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues:"—all the unconverted race of mankind, of every nation and tongue.

These scriptures are plain and express; and the meaning of them cannot be mistaken. If you deny the evidence which they give, you must deny the plainest matter of fact in the world: for if you look upon the troubled face of the sea, and then look into the working of your own souls, you must observe the most striking likeness. The mind is as seldom serene and calm, as the face of the ocean is: various passions, succeeding one another in perpetual fluctuation, forbid it to rest—they are always agitating and tossing it—opinions are continually changing, tempers ever fluctuating, as wave follows wave—fashions are never at a stand, not only in dress, but also in learning—one system still pushing out another, ebbing and flowing, like the tide—and even the moral relations, and the moral fitness of things, notwithstanding their metaphysical

eternity, are always fluctuating and changing, and yet always restless. And it cannot be otherwise; because the mind of fallen man is the very picture of the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, troubled like the sea, like it cannot rest, like it casting up the mire of corruption and the dirt of sensuality; consequently there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. And is not this altogether the perfect likeness of the changeable inconstant world, whose tempers, passions, pursuits, and vices, are like the waves of the sea, succeeding one another in perpetual fluctuation and disorder?

Thus experience confirms the testimony of scripture, and by the mouth of these two witnesses the truth ought to be established. And what farther objection will you make to it? You will not say that you do not find it to be a matter of fact by your own experience. Would to God none of you made this objection! for it does not prove that you are not in a storm, but only that you are seized with a sinful lethargy; and you doze and sleep on while the vessel is sinking. Oh, my brethren, this is the strongest delusion of sin! and for the love of God and your own souls, awake! You are indeed perishing: see! the waves are breaking in upon you; death is at hand, and will not your own safety induce you to shake off this lethargy? What a wonderful delusion is this! Satan and the world have been crying unto you, Peace! peace! when there is no peace; they have lulled conscience asleep, and probably have seared it with a hot iron, and rendered it past feeling. In this case you will not feel your danger, although you are just sinking; the waves will soon swallow you up; and then you will find a storm, when the wrath of the Almighty falls upon you, of which the greatest fury of winds and waves can give but a very faint and imperfect image. God grant you may escape it! and may his grace awaken all your consciences, who sleep in sin! May the infinite love of the blessed Jesus open your eyes, and show you your danger, that you may be led to cry unto him for deliverance! which is the

Second remark I have to make. And this relates to those persons among you who find they are in a storm, and are willing to come to Christ, as these redeemed of the Lord did in the text, that he may command the winds and the waves, and there may be a calm. If you can but once see your danger, you are safe: for your distress cannot be greater than the Redeemer's mercy. Although you find yourselves sinking in the mighty waters, yet you have only to cry with Peter, on the same occasion, Lord, save me! and Jesus will certainly stretch forth his almighty arm, and you shall be saved. If you do but see your danger, and, out of the deep sense of it cry unto him for help, he will not cast out your prayer: for he is a God of love, and his love is almighty to save. Be your sins ever so great, ever so numerous, your danger from them ever so imminent, fly but to the altar of his mercy, and take hold of the merits of that most precious blood which was shed upon it, and then you are safe: for the blood of the Lamb of God was shed for sinners, and no sinner ever sought aright to partake of the merits of it, and was cast out. I came not, says the blessed Jesus, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Sinners alone want a Saviour, and our God was therefore called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins; and he has promised, in the text, that as soon as they cry unto him out of the deep sense of their distress, he will hear and answer: for he is always more ready to save than they are to cry unto him for salvation. And may these considerations hasten you to seek this help: into whatever distress sin may have thrown you, if it has exposed you to all the storms and tempests of the world, yet here is an almighty deliverer. The winds and the waves know his voice; and when he commands, they obey. At his word the jarring elements are silent in the natural world; and they will be the same in the spiritual. If he speak peace unto your souls, there will be a calm indeed. The rage of conscience, agitated by the dark blasts of guilt, and by the horrible waves of misery, will presently subside, all the inconstant tempers and ruffled passions will be composed, and a serenity but little short of heaven will ensue.

Such is the God of our salvation. Whoever among you, then, sees your danger, and wishes for deliverance, come to our God, and he will save you. Come to the Lord Jesus with strong crying and tears, and you have his word

for it, that you shall find in him an almighty deliverer. Oh ye poor distressed souls, whom conscience and guilt torment, here is your only remedy. Look up to your redeeming God; for his mercy is above your distresses. Your offences may be great against him; but they cannot be so great as you will find, by faith, his love is to you. He loved you even when you left him: how much more will he love you now you are returning? Remember what he suffered for you: for your sins he sweat drops of blood; for your sins he endured the torments of his bitter passion; for your sins he bled on the cross; and for your sins he died: his love to you was stronger than death: and therefore be not discouraged at the sight of your own wickedness. He will receive you, be ye ever so sinful: he will not shut you out, if ye have been ever so ungrateful. Only come to him this day, and let there be raised in your hearts a strong cry for his salvation. Now try the truth of what you have heard. Seek him with your most fervent desires and earnest prayers, and see whether he be not the almighty Saviour of sinners. And if you come believing, as these redeemed of the Lord did, in the text, who, when they saw no way left to escape, at last looked up to him, then he will as certainly save you as he did them. Oh may his blessed Spirit put it into all your hearts to seek his love, until he bring you to the haven where you would be; first to the holy haven of the church militant, and then to the happy haven of the church triumphant! And

After you have received his mighty deliverance—after he has brought you safe from the storms of the world, and has calmed the winds, and composed the waves which opposed your voyage to the desired haven—has made you a just and holy member of the ark of his church, and has placed you securely in it—after he has done these wonders for you, is it possible for you to be silent in your deliverer's praise? While you have a grateful sense of his benefits fresh in mind, you will certainly be celebrating them. You cannot refrain from the just tribute of thanks. And this is the third and last part of the beautiful painting in the text: "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." And they who have been in danger, and they who have been delivered, and now live in safety and joy, they must be telling of his salvation all the day long. Their hearts overflow with gratitude and praise. Redemption is their favourite subject; and the very name of their Redeemer is dear and precious. JESUS is a word that sounds exceeding sweet and pleasant in their ears: they find continual delight in speaking of their redeeming God, and in declaring the wonders which he hath done for their redemption. And they praise him with the gratitude of the heart, and with the thankfulness of all the affections, not only in private, but also in public; not only with their lips but with their lives: for the praises of a pure and holy life are the best sacrifices of thanksgiving which we can now offer. And may our almighty God and Saviour grant that every one of you may thus praise him! O blessed Jesus! let this scripture be fulfilled to-day in this whole congregation! Let not one of them depart until they see upon what a stormy ocean they are all embarked, and what dreadful winds and waves sin, and Satan, and the world, have raised against them. Show them their danger, that they may fly unto thee for help. And the moment they cry unto thee, be at hand, O God of love! to hear and answer; and bring them safe by thy good Spirit from the storms and tempests of this world unto the desired haven. Blessed Jesus! say unto our troubled souls, Peace, be still! Let thy grace calm all our passions, and so smooth all our ruffled tempers, that every one of us may go out of the church in perfect love with thee, and with one another. Hear us, most adorable Saviour, and answer us to the glory of the Father and to the honour of the eternal Spirit, three persons of one undivided Essence; whom we worship and adore now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

PSALM cvii. 33—39.

He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein: he turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

IN the former parts of this divine hymn we have seen the misery and distress of mankind in their fallen state, from which, so soon as they were made thoroughly sensible of it, and humbled under it, our gracious Redeemer delivered them. He came upon their first cry; and his almighty arm brought salvation. And his love was equal to his power: for he not only saved them from their misery and distress, which was indeed a most adorable act of free and unmerited grace, but he also enriched them with his divine and heavenly blessings, which, since they could never merit, they could therefore have no reason ever to expect. But mercy is the distinguishing attribute of our Lord Jesus. He is free to pardon—free to give. Whosoever cometh unto him, he will in nowise cast out, neither out of his love here, nor his glory hereafter. And shall not they, who have tasted of his redeeming love, comply with the prophet's request in this psalm? Shall not they be thankful? Consider from what a depth of misery his free grace has raised them, and then judge how it is possible for them to refuse their due tribute of thankfulness? You saw them first in the wilderness, lost and starving travellers, ready to perish: you beheld them falling into the pit, where the enemy found them, and put them in chains of misery and iron: and how greatly were you moved at the sight of their sickness, when they lay pining away through a total loss of appetite, and were grown so weak and feeble, that death was ready to take them into the prison of the grave, and to shut its gates upon them! and, what was the worst of all, the soul was never at rest; sin, which brought them into these miseries, made them still more miserable under them. Guilt would not suffer any of the faculties to be composed, and conscience never knew what it was to be in a calm. Indeed, the whole man, body and soul, were in such a continual ferment, and so distressed for fear of perishing every moment, that nothing in nature could so perfectly represent their situation as the distress of mariners at sea in a violent storm. These are the dark scenes in which the unconverted and unregenerate lay: you have beheld the shady part of their picture: now you are to look upon a more agreeable and pleasing prospect. Under the image which we are to view at present, the Holy Spirit has given us a beautiful painting of their deliverance; and we see the same persons who lay in the most exquisite distress, here placed in the most delightful and happy circumstances. They are brought out of the wilderness, and out of the pit, and are healed of all their infirmities; and their consciences are composed and calm—they are pardoned freely—made just and holy—admitted into the one true church of Christ—and blessed in it by him with all true, spiritual graces. Oh what an entire and happy change is this! God grant that every unconverted person here present may experience it! May he turn the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs, &c. May the love of our almighty Deliverer exert his power this day, and fulfil every word of what is here said of the Gentile church in this whole congregation! while I am

First, Laying before you a comment upon the words, and

Secondly, Bringing the doctrine contained in them home to your hearts, by way of spiritual application.

The Holy Spirit begins with a description of the rejecting of the Jewish church, and of the transferring of its privileges and graces to the Gentiles. "He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground." This passage

is here applied in a spiritual sense; it relates to redemption: and nothing more is necessary to the understanding of it than to remember that water is, in scripture, the known and established emblem of the Holy Spirit. What the one does in nature, the other does in grace. St. John puts the matter beyond all doubt, in his comment upon Christ's words, who had been speaking of the waters which should flow from believers: But this, says he, he spake of the Spirit. And the other scriptures speak of the Spirit under the same image. A church enriched with the graces of heaven is compared by the prophets to a well-watered garden, Isaiah lviii. 11, Jer. xxxi. 12, to the paradise of God, watered with its four fruitful rivers: for, as every thing useful and ornamental in the vegetable world is raised up by water, so is every thing in the spiritual world raised up by the Holy Spirit. And in the Jewish church he had caused every virtue abundantly to grow: it was nourished with the streams of his divine grace, enriched with the dew of heaven, and blessed with rivers of comfort, insomuch, that it wanted no manner of thing that is good. St. Paul thus enumerates the blessings of the Israelites: "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came," Rom. ix. 4. And when he came, this once favourite church would not receive him for the promised Messiah, but rejected and murdered him. For which crime the greatest part of the Jewish nation was cut off, and the rest, according to their own prophecies, were dispersed over the face of the earth, and they will continue dispersed, until they receive Jesus of Nazareth for their Saviour and their God. While they justify the horrid rebellion of their forefathers, who crucified the Lord of life, the veil must remain upon their hearts: and it is remarkably upon them at present; for they are the most stupidly infatuated of all people, living without either civil or ecclesiastical polity, without a temple, without a priest, without sacrifices, without an atonement, and, indeed, they are now without a God; because they have rejected the true God, the blessed Trinity of their fathers, and worship they know not what. They have set up some strange kind of an infinitely extended metaphysical being, whom they call the one supreme God, and who never had any existence but what the enemies of Christianity have been pleased to give him. Thus they have turned the once fruitful church into a wilderness And the Holy Spirit here describes them in this situation. The church of God, which he had blessed with his promises, and with his prophets, and had enriched with the continual streams of his grace, was now made barren. When it rejected that God and Saviour, on whom its whole economy was founded, then he took away all its privileges and blessings, and it has been ever since a poor, dead, barren wilderness. Deprived of his grace, it was reduced to the same state which the most fruitful country would soon be in if it should be deprived of the rain and dew of heaven: for then nothing could grow. It would become a barren desert. Apply this to the present state of the Jews, and you see how God turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground—and, as it follows in the 34th verse, "He turneth a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." This scripture is now fulfilled literally as well as spiritually. The Holy Land has been as remarkable for its fruitfulness, as it is now for its barrenness; for it was once the most fruitful country in the world. The sacred writers mention the particular blessings with which it was enriched. Moses speaks of it in these words: "The country which thou goest to possess is a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year; and therefore it is a good land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness: thou shalt not lack any thing in it." And it fully answered this description. It was once dressed and cultivated, and flourished like a fruitful vineyard; but at present it lays desolate and waste. The vineyard of the Lord of hosts was the house of Israel; and because, after all his cultivation, they brought forth no fruit, therefore he declares, "I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the

wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briers and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no more upon it," Isaiah v. 5, 6. This prophecy is now fulfilled. Judea is one entire wilderness, overrun with briers and thorns, as historians relate, and modern travellers testify. And the fruitful land was turned into barrenness for the wickedness of them who dwelt therein. Wickedness was the cause of its desolation. The prophets had foretold them of their utter extirpation from the promised land, if they should reject the Messiah when he came. And he came to his own, but his own received him not; they opposed, blasphemed, and crucified him, and therefore, according to his own predictions, they were cut off and dispersed over the face of the earth; and the fruitfulness of their country was taken from it, and given to the Gentiles, as it follows in the 35th verse: "He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs." The heathen nations gladly received Jesus for their Saviour and their God, and therefore their wilderness was turned into a standing water, and their dry ground into water-springs; and this happened when the Spirit was poured upon them from on high: for then the wilderness became a fruitful field, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed like the rose; it blossomed abundantly, and rejoiced even with joy and singing. And he enriched the heathens thus abundantly with the streams of divine grace, after he had made them thirsty, and had disposed them to receive the water of life with thankfulness; "for when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them; I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground—I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." The prophet Isaiah is full of these images: he frequently compares the heathens, before they received the gospel, to a desolate wilderness; but, after they embraced it, to a cultivated garden, enriched with beautiful flowers and useful fruits, covered at first with the most fragrant blossoms, and afterwards abounding with the richest products; and it received all its fruitfulness from the rain and dew of heaven. The grace of the Holy Spirit was the cause of their flourishing and bringing forth fruit under the gospel. His gracious operation is as necessary in the spiritual world as the genial influences of warm showers are in the natural. He does the same in grace which they do in vegetation.

The scripture teaches us to take our ideas of his operation from this image; and it is very familiar and well understood. You all know what are the effects of soft gentle rain: you have seen it cover the earth in a short time with a most agreeable verdure, after it had been parched and burnt up with a long drought. You have seen what plentiful harvests followed a mild dropping season; so that it might be said, without a figure, "the clouds drop fatness." And you may see the influence of the Holy Spirit equally fruitful in his province. Look into the early ages of the Christian church, and you will see how he blessed and enriched the first converts from heathenism: they put forth every blossom that is fair and fragrant, and were fruitful also in every good word and work: they had been like barren trees in a wilderness, without leaves, or blossom, or fruit; but, so soon as they were transplanted into the church, they began to flourish abundantly, and, watered with the continual streams of divine grace, they brought forth fruit unto eternal life. And thus the wilderness was turned into a standing water, and the dry ground into water-springs, verse 36; "and there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation." And in this fruitful soil he placeth the hungry. They wander no more, as they did in the wilderness; they are no more lost and ready to perish; but they here find an abiding city, and are securely settled within the pale of the church. "And they sow their lands," verse 37. Our blessed Lord has explained these words. The seed, he says, is the word—sowing the seed in the lands is sowing the word in the hearts of the hearers. And this was the office of the apostles, and of the succeeding ministers of the gospel. Indeed, the apostles were most eminent and blessed in this great work: for they carried the good seed into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. They converted whole provinces and

kingdoms to the faith, and they went on sowing the word without ceasing, until they had planted it in every wilderness upon the face of the earth, and had there watered it with the dew of heaven. Oh that our Almighty Lord would raise up in this our day an army of apostolical ministers, who, like their predecessors, have the good seed sown abundantly in their own hearts, and are therefore best able to sow it in the hearts of others! And by the success of such men in sowing their lands, may many "vineyards be planted!" A vineyard is, in scripture, the established emblem of the church, where the true vine grows and flourishes. The Psalmist and the wise king apply it in this sense; and the prophet Isaiah puts it beyond doubt in the 5th chapter, where, explaining the parable of the vineyard, he says, "the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel." And our blessed Saviour makes this application of the same parable; indeed, the Jews themselves make it: for when he asked them what he should do to those husbandmen who had injured some, and slain others of the servants of the Lord of the vineyard, and at last murdered his own son, they reply, "He will miserably destroy these wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen." Accordingly, he let it out to us. When he destroyed the wicked men of the Jewish church, he then let out his vineyard to us Gentiles. The apostles came and planted churches among us, and the almighty arm of our God has thus far protected them. Oh may his grace and favour continue, that we "may bring forth fruits of increase," as the churches first brought out of the wilderness did. They brought forth all the fair blossoms of a holy life; and they were not like some early buds, which are apt to be cut off by cold winds and sharp frosts, but they had grace to withstand the severest storms of temptation, and both to set and to ripen their fruit—fruit of increase—growing still in grace—increasing from one degree to another—and persevering until they reaped the crown of eternal glory. And thus the last part of the beautiful image in the text was completed—He blessed them so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not the cattle to decrease. By the particular blessing of the almighty God and Saviour, they multiplied greatly; the Lord adding to the church daily such as should be saved. His grace went out along with the first preachers of the gospel, as he still does with all his faithful ministers; and he gave them a fortitude, which no danger could intimidate, and a power of utterance, which the adversary could not withstand: insomuch, that when the poor fishermen had been toiling all the night and had taken nothing, yet, when the Lord gave the word, and accompanied it with his blessing, they enclosed a great number of fishes, even enough to fill both the ships—both the ark of the Jewish and the ark of the Gentile church. Then was his promise fulfilled: "I will make you fishers of men:" for they caught thousands at once. The first time they let down the net, they took three thousand, and the second time, five thousand. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed. And though this be a day of small things, yet the Lord's hand is not shortened: he can still bless us, and make us multiply exceedingly. We see some happy instances of it; sufficient to convince us that if we had more apostolical ministers, who had a single eye to the glory of their adorable master, and were inflamed with a fervent love to the souls of men, he would still bless our labours abundantly. O almighty Jesus! we are here waiting for thy blessing: now bless us; and, since thou hast promised that the very cattle of thy household, the church, should not decrease, enable us, Lord, so to increase, that every part of this scripture may be fulfilled to-day in this whole congregation. And may his divine grace influence all your hearts, while I am endeavouring to speak unto them under the

Second general head, Which was to apply what has been said.

The words contain a new argument for thankfulness, taken from the loving-kindness of our most gracious Redeemer, who found us in the dry barren deserts of heathenism, blind in ignorance, sunk in vice, and yet, wretched as we were, his mercy was moved at the sight of our misery, and his grace flew to our relief. When the Jewish church rejected him, and persecuted his apostles and followers, then he sent the Romans to destroy it. Upon which we were taken into his love and favour. We poor heathens, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death; we were admitted into his church, watered with his grace, enriched with his

blessings, and protected by his almighty arm unto this very day. And ought we not to be thankful for such inestimable and eternal mercies? Should we not speak forth the praises of this most loving Redeemer, and endeavour to inspire all the world with gratitude to him? Certainly, this is a duty most right and equitable; and therefore I will make some short remarks upon the distinct parts of it, in the order they are placed in the text. And

First, The Holy Spirit here teaches us what a situation we were in before God turned away the streams of his grace from the Jewish church, and directed them to us. We were in a barren wilderness—barren of every thing spiritual and divine. Although the heathens flourished in arts and sciences, were polite and classical; although they could form the accomplished gentleman, and finish the character of the good moral man; although they had excellent systems of ethics, and knew all the moral and civil virtues; yet, if the word of God be true, they were in a wilderness. The most refined classical scholars, with all their knowledge, were in a vast desert; for they knew not Jesus Christ. And without him the most polished genius is no nearer salvation than the most barbarous savage; because, without him, they neither know the way to heaven nor, if known, can they take one step in it. There was a total ignorance among them concerning the divine nature, and concerning the atonement for sin: and our ancestors in this island were sunk as low in ignorance and vice as any of the heathens. They were in a wilderness, where no saving truth grew; but superstition and idolatry flourished. That we are not still in this situation is entirely owing to the free mercy of our blessed Redeemer, who sent the streams of his grace into our barren hearts. This is the

Second point remarkable in the text. The Psalmist says, he sent waters into the wilderness to change its nature; that is, he sent his grace into our hearts to change their nature, to show them their dead and barren state, to make them sensible of it, distressed under it, and then cry to him for deliverance. And when grace has thus far disposed the heart aright, and it can pray for more grace, then will our Lord enrich it with abundant streams; for he is always disposed to give in the measure we are disposed to receive: and if we hunger and thirst for much, he has promised that we shall be filled. There is no doctrine of Christianity more opposed than this, nor any at present more ridiculed. And until men desire to have their barren hearts changed, it must sound strange to them to talk of the necessity of doing what they have no desire to do. They have found nothing of this barrenness in their own souls; they do not believe what we say of it; and therefore it appears to them like talking of a sixth sense. But the more insensible they are, the greater is their danger. And if there be any of you in this state, thus dozing and sleeping away your lives in carnal security, be assured that you are yet in the wilderness, and, the less you see it, the more barren you are. If you see not your hearts covered with sin and desolation, oh what blindness, what infatuation, has seized you! for until you see your natural barrenness, you will find no want of grace to amend and enrich the soil; and without grace nothing can grow. It is equally necessary towards changing and reforming the soul, as water is to change and reform the desolate wilderness. And as in its hot dry sand no vegetable can grow without moisture, so in your barren hearts no good thing can grow without the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: "for without me," says he, "ye can do nothing." And therefore, my brethren, if you refuse to believe this doctrine, you must act against the evidence of your senses. And it will greatly increase your condemnation that the scriptures have set in so clear a light the necessity of grace; and yet you would not be convinced, but would still obstinately live and perish in your barren state, unfruitful and dead to every good word and work. May God show you, since argument cannot, your sinfulness and guilt! Oh that his blessed Spirit would now let you see your own hearts, that there may be raised in them a strong crying for grace! And if he does bring you to desire it, the love of our blessed God, who has it to give, cannot withhold it: he will bless and enrich you to such a degree, that you shall bring forth fruits of increase. This is the

Third doctrinal point in the text. The streams of divine grace were there-

fore sent into the wilderness, that its nature might be changed, and might bring forth fruits of increase. And into whatever heart grace enters, it makes an entire change and reformation. A wilderness improved into a regular and beautiful garden is not so great a change: for grace makes the man a new creature. The dead faculties of his soul revive, the barren grow and shoot forth, the understanding bears the fairest blossoms, and the will and affections ripen and perfect the sweetest fruit. Under the genial influence of grace, the whole man is like a tree planted by the water side, always green and flourishing, that will bring forth its fruit in due season. And whatever fruit is brought to maturity by the mild and gentle operation of this divine agent, will be acceptable to God the Father. Good works, put forth and perfected by grace, are well pleasing to him. When grace has changed our barren hearts, and reformed them, by justifying us through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, then are we enabled to proceed in the work of sanctification; but not before: because an unjust person cannot bring forth justifying fruit, no more than a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit. Our persons must be just and right before our works can be; and the scripture is positive, that we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Good works belong to a new creation; and before we can do them, we must be created anew; we must become new creatures in Christ Jesus, and be grafted into him by the living principle of grace, and draw our nourishment from him as much as a branch does from its stock, before we can bear the fruit of any one good work. This is scripture. This is the doctrine of our church. And whatever some proud self-righteous Pharisees may fancy, this is the doctrine of philosophy and nature. We have sensible demonstration of it. Take a branch off from the stock on which it grew, and let it lie in the open air; what will it produce? You see, it withers and dies. If any man be cut off from Christ, the stock upon which we must all grow or perish, for ever, what will he produce? Hear our Lord's judgment: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." This is the determination of our infallible God; and if you refuse to submit to it, after it has been confirmed by our church, and indeed by the whole Christian church, and by matter of fact, and sensible demonstration; if all this evidence cannot convince you, what will you object to the experience of all living Christians, who declare with one voice: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy free grace be all the praise." This is the language of every true believer; who confesses that he cannot so much as think a good thought without the influence of the Holy Spirit: for it is he who worketh in us, both to will and to do. If this still cannot convince you, may that grace which you oppose work upon your hearts, and convince you effectually! May the giver of all grace show you your barrenness without it, and dispose you to seek until you find a thorough change and reformation! and then you will join your grateful hearts with ours in returning praise and thanks to our God, who has so blessed us with his grace as to enable us to bring forth fruits of increase.

And this is the fourth and last remark, which belongs to believers who know by happy experience the truth of the scripture which we have been considering: for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ has brought them out of the wilderness, changed their barrenness by his grace, planted them in his church, watered them with the dew of heaven, and enriched them with all the sweet fruits of a holy life. In you, my Christian brethren, this scripture is fulfilled. And therefore you cannot but be thankful. To our dearest Redeemer you offer up your praises with joy and delight. When you consider what wonders Jesus hath done for your salvation, you cannot be silent in his praise; but, big with a lively sense of the numerous and eternal blessings of his free grace, you speak of him with the highest strains of gratitude, and yet you find you cannot put forth all his praise. You are unable to declare, in words, what your hearts feel; and therefore you let your lives speak forth his praise, as well as your lips. Oh may his blessed Spirit keep you always in this thankful temper! and may our gracious and most adorable Jesus increase daily the number of the thankful! May his grace change and

reform the wilderness of sinners' hearts, that the good seed of the word may be sown in them, and they may grow and flourish in the vineyard of the Lord's church, there bringing forth abundantly the fruits of increase! O almighty Saviour, if there be any in this congregation still in the wilderness, now bring them out of it; now water their hearts with the plentiful streams of thy grace, and grant, most loving God, that some—oh! if it be but one soul—may be added this day to thy little flock; that, finding thy blessing and thy power present among us, we may go on multiplying exceedingly, until the earth be full of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the waters cover the sea: and may all redound to the glory of God the Father, and to the honour of the eternal Spirit, the Trinity in unity, whom we worship and adore now and for ever! *Amen.*

SERMON VIII.

PSALM cvii. 39—41.

Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way. Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

WE left the redeemed of the Lord in the most flourishing situation. After they had been brought out of the wilderness, and delivered from the pit, and healed of their infirmities, and saved from the storms of vice, they were placed under the tender care of their most loving Redeemer: and, upon the rejection of the Jewish church, he sent into the wilderness the abundant streams of his grace, and there he planted the Gentile church, watering it with his good Spirit, and cherishing it with the genial warmth of the light of life; by whose influence it grew and spread, and was so enriched and blessed, that it multiplied exceedingly, and became like a well cultivated and fertile country, where they sow their lands and plant vineyards, which yield them fruits of increase, some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold. And this experience of their Redeemer's love is certainly sufficient to make every one of them thankful, and to excite in their hearts the warmest sentiments of praise and gratitude.

In the words which I have read, we have a new motive for thankfulness, taken from the decline and decay of the Christian church. Its fruitfulness is now turned into barrenness. The same country which you saw before adorned with the sweetest blossoms, bringing forth the richest fruits, and covered all over with plenty, is now degenerated again into a wilderness. Nothing grows in it but thorns and thistles, the fruits of the curse. This is a melancholy change of the church, and it should move us greatly to see it fall back again into the same desolate and wretched state, from which it had been raised. But it has been the invariable rule of the Redeemer's providence. He waters the church with his grace, and blesses it with the light of his fruitful rays, so long as men will receive their kind influence. But when they reject them, either by refusing to make any use of them, or by perverting them to a wrong use, then he withholds his blessings; he withdraws his grace and the light of his countenance: upon which, the same darkness and deadness ensue in the church as would be in the world if the sun were to withdraw his comfortable light and heat, and to arise no more with his reviving beams upon the earth. Thus he turned the fruitful land of the Jewish church into a wilderness for the wickedness of them who dwelled therein; and he transferred their fruitfulness to the wilderness of the Gentiles. And again, he turns our fruitful country into a wilderness for the wickedness of them who dwell in it. He began to fulfil this scripture by removing the grace and light of the gospel from the seven churches in Asia; and he has left us, in this treatment of them, a terrible example of his just vengeance upon every wicked infidel church. And he has since taken vengeance upon several other churches. When they refused to walk by the light of his gospel, he then removed the candlestick from them; and, deprived of his light, they could produce nothing but the

works of darkness, and would certainly be sentenced to that outward darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever. Our church has long refused to walk by the light of the gospel. God grant our candlestick may not be entirely removed! We do indeed deserve it. Our crying national sins, and our open insolent infidelity, call aloud for judgment. Oh! what mercy must dwell in his breast who hears daily multitudes of traitors plotting the destruction of his divinity, and yet, after repeated acts of treason, for any one of which, against the king's person, they would have been justly put to death, nevertheless spares them, and withholds the deserved punishment! But although he be a God of mercy, yet his Spirit may be grieved, and his long-suffering may be wearied out. Remember how he destroyed the seven churches; and behold in what a wilderness they now lie: and we shall perish after their example, unless we repent. And I hope the consideration of the scripture now before us may, by his blessing, be the means of persuading those among you, who are his enemies, now to sue to him for pardon, and to confirm those who have placed their whole trust and confidence in his merits. As to the former, their dreadful situation is described in these words: "Again they are minished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow," &c. And as to the latter, they have a sweet promise of his loving protection, even in the greatest corruption of the church: "Yet setteth he the poor humble Christian on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock." While the rest of the world sits in darkness and in the shadow of death, the people of God have light in all their dwellings. While others are visited with his plagues and judgments, he sets his own people on high, out of the reach of affliction; and in the worst of times he watches over them with the care of the most tender shepherd, and makes them families like a flock. And these are the persons here called upon to be thankful: and if they, after such mercies, should be silent, the very stones would cry out, and call them ungrateful.

Let us then meditate upon these interesting words,

First, By considering their sense and meaning, and

Secondly, By applying the doctrine contained in them to our spiritual use and improvement.

And may the blessed Spirit go along with us, and enable us to reap all the profit from this scripture, which he intended for the faithful by recording it! Let us, then, inquire into his guidance, by what means the church, which we saw before flourishing and fruitful, should now become a desolate wilderness, and were brought out of it, and placed in the fruitful garden of the church, are again diminished and brought as low as they were at first. They decrease in number, and are depressed in condition. They who multiplied exceedingly are again diminished, and they who were high in every respect are brought low. The faithful are diminished from among the children of men. Oh! dreadful change! to be turned from fruitfulness into barrenness—from a flourishing church into a desolate wilderness—from being cherished with the comfortable rays of divine light, and watered with the fertile dew of heaven, now to be deprived of both—are the greatest calamities which can befal a people in this world. To be thus driven into the wilderness again, is worse than to have been in at first; because, after God had visited them with the grace of his gospel, and has now withdrawn himself in displeasure, there is no reason to think that he will return in mercy to a people who have abused his grace and insulted his gospel. After he has long waited to reclaim them, and they still reject the offers of his pardoning love, and stand out against all his entreaties, obstinately rebellious, then it will be but just and equitable if he suffer them to be again diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. These three are the causes of the decay of the Christian church; and they contain a short history of that mystery of iniquity which now worketh in the children of disobedience. The first cause is, the oppressor; the second is, the evil of sin, into which he brings them; and the third is, the evil of sorrow and misery. And it is impossible that any church or society should flourish which is under the vile bondage of the cruel oppressor, and sin and misery. Under these tyrants it must be diminished and brought low.

The first, we render Oppression; but as there must be an agent to perform

the action, I therefore chose to give him his term of office, and to call him the oppressor. Such a one was Pharaoh, who oppressed the children of God, and by his hard bondage tried to diminish them and to bring them low: and he holds forth to us, in his manner of treating the Israelites, a lively portraiture of a more cruel oppressor, who is a declared enemy to all the people of God, and who has been trying to murder them from the beginning. The oppression of this great adversary was represented in Pharaoh's bondage: for it was by his instigation that Pharaoh was such a tyrant over the bodies of the Israelites as he is over the souls of all his deluded followers. So that the oppressor is a just and expressive title of the great tyrant, the devil. Is not he the oppressor of God's people, who brought us all into slavery by the original transgression, and who leaves no temptation untried to keep us his slaves? Although he deals in nothing but lies and murder, yet he keeps the multitude under his infernal bondage, and oppresses them with the most heavy yoke of sin and misery. And when they begin to be uneasy, and to be galled with the yoke, he tempts and deceives them on with lies, using all his cunning wiles, and laying every bewitching snare for their destruction. And although they are assured that he has no wages to give them, but death, temporal and eternal, yet he deludes and leads them on, until he gets them fast bound with the chains of sin and misery. And is he not an oppressor? Is not such a lawless tyrant, who has an absolute dominion over sinners, and who executes it with hellish malice, is not he the great oppressor? And so far as his tyranny reaches, the church must be diminished and brought low. He keeps it under by means of evil, which is the second cause of its decline. We render the word Affliction, but it signifies evil, and, properly, the evil of sin. The evils of affliction and misery, which follow sin, are expressed in the third cause of the church's decay. The great oppressor overthrows the most flourishing church by sin. This is the successful battery he raises against it; by which he first gained and still keeps his dominion: for sin cuts off all the supplies of grace which the soul might receive from heaven, strips it of its armour, and leaves it quite naked and defenceless against the oppressor's stratagems; and a course of sin reconciles men to it: and although they know it must end in their eternal destruction, yet they never seek, nay they are offended when we press them to seek, that divine grace which alone can set them free. And is it not the strongest of all delusions, that the oppressor should make men choose eternal destruction, and should force them to work and labour for it—to take more pains to obtain a place in hell than are necessary to gain heaven? What bondage can be harder? Must it not wear them down and bring them low? For sin is the cause of all evil; and that which subjects us to all—evil of all kinds—certainly must be the vilest oppression. And it is impossible that any church should be in a flourishing condition which is under the bondage of Satan and sin, and thereby subject to sorrow, which is the third cause of the decay of the Christian church. The word Sorrow includes all the evil effects of sin upon the body and the soul, in time and to eternity: for no good can come wherever sin is. The prophet Isaiah gives the reason, lix. 1, 2: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Evil is the cause of God's withholding good: "for your iniquities," says he, "have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you." And when the good things which God has to give are withholden, what can the sinner find but misery and sorrow? And must not misery and sorrow wear him down, and bring him low? Will they not affect his soul, as sickness does his body, bringing it first down to the grave, and then to the lowest place of the infernal pit? And thus the church decays. By these three causes it declines. Christ made it flourish—the oppressor makes it diminish. Grace rendered it fruitful—sin renders it desolate. Through Christ and his grace, it was happy—by the oppressor and sin, it is miserable. And it is one of the strongest proofs and evidences of its present low estate, that the offices of the church, which were formerly respectable, are now become contemptible—"he poureth contempt upon princes." The head of the church fulfils his promise—"them that honour me, I will honour: but they that

despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Be their rank and station ever so great, yet, if they despise me and my laws, I will make them despicable; their highest honours shall not keep them from the lowest contempt, but shall expose them the more to it, and bring it upon them the sooner: for they were therefore raised to be princes, that they might have it in their power to prevent the decline of the church. Their great offices gave them authority, and their great revenues gave them interest, which they ought to have employed for the honour of their master; but as they suffered him to become contemptible, he therefore poured contempt upon them. "The priests' lips," says God, in the prophet Malachi, "should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts: but ye have departed out of the way: ye have caused many to stumble at the law; therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people." So long as the priest's lips preserve knowledge, he is respectable. So long as he has a zeal for his master's honour, he is in high esteem. But when he forgets whose servant he is, and pursues any one thing in preference to the salvation of men's souls, then God suffers him to fall in the opinion and esteem of mankind; for his sovereign Lord and Master poureth contempt upon him, and "causeth him to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way." He, who should teach others the right way, wanders from it; and even the princes are turned into the wilderness, where the gospel at first found them. And when the shepherds are thus lost and bewildered, what must become of their poor flocks? Can the teachers show the sheep how to keep out of that wilderness into which they themselves are fallen? How should it be that the blind should lead the blind, and yet neither of them should go astray? Doubtless the sheep must be unhappy, which have a blind shepherd over them: for the wolf may prey upon them unmolested, whenever he pleases, and may devour and disperse the whole flock.

This is a faithful account of the general decay of the Christian church. Sad experience proves the truth of it. The once flourishing church is now turned into a wilderness. We see it. The whole face of Christendom, compared to its former fruitfulness, is now a desert. The light of the gospel is almost extinguished for the wickedness of those men who take upon them the name of Christianity, but deny the power of it; for the European churches, Protestant and Roman, are already diminished and brought low by the great oppressor, and by sin, and by misery: they are so low that the princes have lost the respect due to their high offices, and are become contemptible, and are now got into that very wilderness from whence the gospel delivered them. In these times of general corruption, the Redeemer might in justice take away our candlestick, as he hath done from other churches. But here is the subject of praise and thanksgiving—that he still continues the light of the gospel to us. He is infinitely merciful to them who trust to him; and be they ever so few, ever so poor and mean, yet he has given them a most sweet and comfortable promise, that when he comes to visit a wicked infidel church, he will watch over them with the care of the most tender shepherd, and they shall lack nothing. Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction—the poor—the poor in spirit—the humble Christian—he setteth on high. He will exalt them of low degree, according to his invariable rule: He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. "And he will make them families like a flock:"—no flock can be more safe within the fold than they shall be: regarded by his infinite love, watched over by his all-seeing eye, and defended by his almighty arm, they shall be set on high, out of the reach of danger. Though they be few, yet they are as dear to their God as the apple of his eye. Though the world despise them, yet the Lord Jesus loves them. Though they be the scorn and ridicule of an infidel age, yet he esteems them more than his own life; for he shed his blood upon the cross to save them. Though they be the off-scouring of the earth, yet they are the riches of heaven. And when their Lord comes again in all his glory, he will take them into his family, and will admit them into the eternal joys of his heavenly kingdom. How happy then must these Christians be, who are thus blessed in those worst times of the church! And oh how thankful should they be, that they were not carried away with the torrent of vice and infidelity! The more wicked the age is the more are they

indebted to the grace of their God, which kept them from the prevailing corruption. And seeing nothing but open profaneness around them, how can they refrain from the praises of their dearest Lord, who preserved them from it? Certainly they cannot avoid giving him thanks for this great blessing while their hearts feel it; and they will do all that lies in their power to make others partake of the same blessing, that they may join with us in the same thanks. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for the wonders that he hath done for the redemption of men!

This is, I think, the sense and meaning of the text: and it is a very awakening scripture, and ought to rouse up your particular attention: for it offers to your consideration a most interesting truth; *viz.* that the Christian church would decline from its flourishing fruitful state, and degenerate again into the wilderness, from whence the Redeemer had taken it. And has this scripture been fulfilled? Has the Christian church been, or is it at present, in a wilderness? Let us consider these points under the second general head, and endeavour to improve them to our spiritual use and benefit. And first, the flourishing church was to be diminished and brought low by the cruel oppressor, and by sin, and by misery. And, God knows, it is diminished and brought low indeed; so very low that it is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed! And I hope his goodness in sparing us may be the means of converting some, and confirming others; if we take a short view of our present unhappy state, with respect to immorality and infidelity, and to consider how little we deserved to be spared.

As to morals, our people are entirely corrupt. They are, beyond the example of former ages, dissolute and dishonest; insomuch, that his majesty has more than once recommended it to the parliament to try to put a stop to the spreading of immorality. But nothing has been done. Nay the want of morals is so evident and glaring, that even the teachers of dry morality begin to find it, and have lately complained in public, that, after all their moral preaching for near a hundred years, the people are not in the least more moral. And is it not time, then, to have done with mere morality, since we have had so much preaching of it, that now we have no morality left? This moral preaching has made our people so immoral, that they are got to a pitch of wickedness beyond what the very heathens ever attained: for to boast of having no virtue or honesty, to make it a matter of merit to be able to act upon no principle, and to be guided by nothing but interest; these are the peculiar characteristics of the present age. And when men thus avow open and barefaced corruption, and, throwing off the very mask of honesty, dare appear publicly the rotten advocates for vice, then certainly the church can never be diminished and brought lower, as to morals. And it might reasonably be expected, that the common people would be thus immoral, since the great have set them the example, and have entirely cast off Christianity. Men of rank and politeness are become too refined and delicate in their notions to believe in Jesus Christ. And they have taken away all necessity of believing in him by utterly exploding his divinity: and yet they keep up the name of Christianity, which is the most stupid and idolatrous religion that ever was invented, if the author of it be not the true God. It rests entirely upon the divinity of Christ: this is its foundation. Nothing can stand without it. But where shall we find great and learned men who believe that Jesus Christ is self-existent, and equal with the Father in every perfection and attribute? Publicly from the press, privately in conversation, you hear this fundamental doctrine of Christianity ridiculed and insulted; and the disbelief has spread, and poisoned all orders and degrees of men; insomuch, that we have societies erected upon the principle of blasphemy, with liberty of free debate, as they call it; that is, with liberty to blaspheme the Godhead of Jesus Christ. And, what is the most melancholy point of all, the church and state look on unconcerned, while that God, whose servants they are, is treated with more insolent blasphemy in this city than the very Jews offered to him at his crucifixion. And are these things really so? Do immorality and infidelity flourish thus abundantly among us? If they do, immorality will soon pull down our church, and infidelity will dig up the very foundations of it; and then, certainly, it will be diminished and brought low. God grant it may

not fall lower than it is; but that the few names which are left in it may be kept from falling, and others may daily be added to them! And this we pray for the more earnestly, that Christ may not pour contempt upon princes; which is the second remark.

The church must be fallen very low when its princes are become contemptible: for they were raised to great dignity, that they might stop the torrent of profaneness and unbelief. Their honours and revenues were to give them weight and influence in the support of their Master's cause: and when it was sinking and like to fall into disgrace, it was certainly their interest then to maintain it with all their might; because, if it fell, their disgrace would not be long after it. But they sat still and quiet, enjoying themselves, warm and snug in their opulent stations, while their Master was wounded with immorality and crucified afresh by unbelief. Although they eat of his bread, yet they saw him robbed of his divine glory, and neither used their tongues nor their pens in his defence: therefore justly did he pour contempt upon such princes. He made them base and mean in the eyes of the people. He took away the respect due to their high offices, and, because they refused to defend his divine honour, though they were well paid for it, he therefore made them dishonourable: for them that despise me, says our God, whatever their station be, shall be lightly esteemed. And has not this happened? Look around Christendom, and see in what church the princes of it are respectable. The bishop of Rome—how low is he sunk! and his brethren are falling fast into disgrace; and the latter part of this verse is fulfilling—"He causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way." Christianity at first found them in a wilderness, and brought them out of it; but now, by rejecting Christ, they are got into it again: for every church without him is desolation. The finest system of religion, that the wit of man can dress up and delineate, is a wilderness without Christ. Let it be ever so artfully put together, yet, unless it begin and end with him, it is but a mere desert. Lay the foundation of it ever so deep in the religion of nature, build it up ever so strong with morality, and adorn it ever so richly with metaphysics, yet it will be a mere delusive phantom, and of no use but to feed learned pride. As Christ is not in it, furnish it with what you please, it will want all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of which the Christian church is full: for it is a building made of God; the foundation of it is laid upon the rock of ages, even upon Jesus Christ, and in him alone it is built up and supported. And it shall stand for ever, and be as beautiful as the paradise of God, when all human systems shall be in ruins; for this shall survive the flames of the great day, and all its members, with Christ at their head, shall ascend into the church triumphant with eternal glory. And then they who built a religion without Christ will be turned away into a wilderness indeed—even the wilderness of mere moralists, of the profane, and the infidel, unto the place appointed for their eternal reception and torment.

Oh what a melancholy and terrible state of things is this! And now let us consider, thirdly, how the prospect of it ought to affect us. And whatever our condition be, I think it must affect us greatly: for what grief of heart must it be to every true believer to see the church which once flourished and multiplied exceedingly, now thus diminished and brought low—to behold the interest of their sovereign Lord lost, and his princes contemptible; how afflicting is the thought! But it is indeed distressful when the danger comes nearer to us, and we see the once fruitful church become a wilderness. Such as the poor ignorant heathens were before Christ came, such are we like to be, with this heavy circumstance to add to our misery, that they wished and longed for what we reject. They saw their want of a Saviour, and embraced the good tidings of the gospel with great joy. But we want no Saviour. Natural religion is enough for us. And the gospel, in any other light than as a system of morality, is absolutely rejected. Thus we are in a worse condition, by refusing Christ's offers of mercy, than the poor heathens were; and consequently our wilderness will be more dismal and melancholy than theirs. And how soon our church may be turned into this wilderness, God only knows: but of this I am certain; that we deserve it, and we have lately had many loud calls to prepare us for it, and some of his judgments are still heavy upon us; and unless they lead us to

repentance, we must perish. Our destruction is at hand. And while our national sins are crying aloud for vengeance, oh let every one of you, who have any interest in the Saviour of the world, call aloud unto him for mercy. Let us pray without ceasing for the continuance of his blessed gospel among us. And let this consideration inflame our hearts, and add zeal to our devotion, that our Lord has promised to set the poor Christians on high, out of the reach of affliction.

This is the fourth and last remark, which belongs only to believers who are of Christ's family and flock. Let the times be ever so bad and corrupt, they shall be safe; let the times be ever so tempestuous, they shall be set on high, out of the reach of the storm. His grace shall keep them from corruption, and his almighty power shall defend them from the distresses of the times. What a sweet promise is this! and how full is it of consolation! God grant you may all taste the comforts of it, and then you will be thankful indeed. You will see how gracious a Master we serve; and you will have reason to bless his holy name. He will pour down upon you, not contempt, but the riches of his free and unmerited graces; by which you will find that, though the Christians be few and poor and mean, though the church be diminished low, yet the head of it is still the almighty God. Jesus has all power in heaven and earth; and he can give his followers, however the world may despise them, such joys as the world has not to give, and such (thanks be to him for it) as the world cannot take away. And these joys he here promises to them who are of his family and flock. And we know that he is faithful who hath promised. We have experienced his faithfulness. God grant you may all experience it this day! that you may happily begin the new year! And though the weather be dull and cloudy, like the state of the church, and the sun has not appeared for many days, oh may the day-star arise, and supply his place in all your hearts with a better light! and then you will go away thankful. And may the mercy of our most adorable Saviour be extended to this whole church and kingdom, as well as to this congregation! Oh may he send out his grace to reform the morals, and his good Spirit to stop the infidelity, of our people! Blessed Jesus, spare them a little. Now the sound of the Gospel is heard in our land, be pleased to accompany it with thy blessing. And if they, to whose ears it is brought, still reject it, then indeed they will deserve destruction. But, in thy wrath, oh think upon mercy! Spare thy people, O Lord, spare them, and turn not thy once fruitful heritage entirely and finally into the wilderness. Hear us, thou God of love, and answer our prayers to the glory of the Father, and the eternal Spirit—the Trinity in unity—to whom be equal honour, and worship, and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON IX.

Psalm cvii. 42, 43.

The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit finishes this divine hymn with these words. He here sums up the argument, and makes the application. His subject is thanksgiving. The argument used to inspire us with thankfulness is taken from redemption. And, since redemption is the greatest blessing which the Almighty has to bestow upon his creatures, it is consequently the strongest argument for their thankfulness. In order to show the greatness of the blessing, the all-wise Author of this psalm has painted, under several images, the exquisite distress and misery of mankind, before they were redeemed. And these images are just and expressive. They are founded in nature, and drawn to the life. And all the redeemed of the Lord have seen their lost estate by sin, which is represented under these images, and can bear their testimony to the truth of the representation: they

remember when they wandered in the wilderness out of the way—when they fell into the bondage and prison of sin—and were there sore diseased with its plagues—and always uneasy and disturbed, like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, tossed and agitated with the storms of vice. The retrospect of these miseries now makes them thankful to their Redeemer, who showed them the way out of the wilderness, by enlightening their understanding; who delivered them from the prison and bondage of sin by justifying them with his most precious blood; and he sent his word, and healed them of all their plagues, by sanctifying them with the holy anointing of his good Spirit; and thus he calmed and composed all the storms of vice which had threatened their destruction. And then he placed them in the secure haven of the church, where they flourished and multiplied exceedingly. In the early ages of Christianity, this part of the psalm was fulfilled—when the first preachers carried the sound of the gospel into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. But in these latter days, the church is again diminished and brought low by the cruel oppressor, and by sin, and by misery. These are the three causes of its decay; and they have now reduced it into the same wretched state in which it lay before it had the knowledge of redemption. But in these times of reproach and blasphemy, the Redeemer has still a small flock left, over whom he watches with the care and affection of the most tender shepherd. And when he comes to destroy a wicked infidel church, he will set these poor humble Christians on high, out of the reach of affliction, and will make them families like a flock. "The righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise, and will observe those things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." God grant that every one of us may be wise to observe those things, and that we may have the true experimental understanding of the loving-kindness of the Lord! and then we shall be able to join our thankful hearts and voices with the church militant and triumphant, and to ascribe praise, and honour, and glory to Jesus, our redeeming God. And may the eternal Spirit now be present among us, and direct our hearts by his grace, enabling us to finish our meditations upon this psalm, with that thankfulness and gratitude, with which he intended it should inspire us. And may this be the happy effect of our considering,

First, The sense and meaning of the words, which contain the application of the whole psalm. The righteous shall see it. The word, here rendered righteous, is not what the scripture commonly uses to signify righteous or justified persons; but it is another word, and conveys another idea. It signifies to direct—to set right; and the righteous here mentioned are they who are directed in the right way, and walk, as Enoch did, with God in his way, and not in the way of the world. And these shall see the goodness and mercy of God's dealings with the fallen race of men. They shall have eyes to see the ways of his providence. The same grace which set them right will manifest to them the reasonableness of the plan of redemption. They shall see and admire, and be thankful for, the wonders of his redeeming love, which are recorded in this divine hymn. While they read it, their own hearts will bear testimony to its truth; for it is a lively picture of their own state and condition. They well remember the time when sin misled them, held them in bondage, and subjected them to all its diseases and storms: but so soon as they had a deep sense of their misery, and were disposed to seek the Redeemer's mercy, he was at hand—a God to save. When they cried unto the Lord Jesus in their trouble, he delivered them out of their distresses, and gave them a free and full redemption. Finding all this fulfilled in their own souls, have they not great reason to rejoice? The righteous shall see it, and rejoice. It shall be to them a matter of solid lasting joy; not like the crackling of thorns under a pot—a flashy transitory joy, which arises from a light vain mind, and which the world can give and take away—but the Christian joy is the fruit of the Spirit, produced by his gracious working upon the heart, showing it the dangers which it has escaped, and the happy state into which it is brought; from whence springs what the scripture calls joy in the Holy Ghost; because it is entirely his gift. Nothing but his grace can enable sinners to rejoice in the Lord always; which

we find they can: for this is the happy state of every pardoned sinner—that he can rejoice in God. So soon as he is admitted into Christ's kingdom, he is filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The sense of Christ's redeeming love administers to him joy unspeakable and full of glory; as he told his apostles, "Ye shall be sorrowful; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Every believer has found the truth of this scripture. After they had seen their lost estate by nature, and their souls were filled with anguish and bitterness at the sight of their guilt and misery, they cried unto the Lord Jesus for deliverance, and he came. His infinite love brought him with haste to save them, and he turned their sorrow into joy, giving them reason to rejoice with a gladness of heart, which no man can take from them. Oh may the love of the almighty Jesus bestow this joy upon every one of you! and he will not withhold it from you if you seek it. If you can but desire it, you will find him more ready to give than you are to ask it. He shed his blood to purchase it for you: he bought it with an inestimable price; and the same love which disposed him to die, rather than you should be without this joy, still disposes him to bestow it. Go, therefore, to the throne of his grace. Ask, and ye shall have. And will you not go to him for it? Will you not receive it upon these easy terms? Have you no desire to attain that joy which Christ alone can give? no desire to be pardoned, to be made just and holy, and to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, and peace? If any one of you are in this wretched condition, stop—reflect a moment—and consider what enemies you are to your own enjoyments; for you cannot live without joy. And what is your constant subject of rejoicing? If it be any thing in this world, it is imperfect in its kind: you know it by experience. And it endures but a short time; and then it perishes, and you with it. And will you prefer this empty destructive joy to that fulness and perfection of joy which Jesus Christ has to give? Be ye assured, there is no true cause of rejoicing but in him, and nothing that deserves the name of joy but in the knowledge of what he hath done for our souls. And would to God I could inform you perfectly of this knowledge! for if you had clear ideas of it, you could not avoid seeking and praying for it: but it is indeed beyond description. Joy in the Holy Ghost is an earnest and a foretaste of heaven. Oh may you seek until you find it; and may the blessed Spirit bring you into the happy number of the righteous, who see the wonders which the Redeemer has done for their salvation, and therefore rejoice! And when their joy is full, then all iniquity shall stop her mouth: the ridiculer and the blasphemer shall be silent. They shall be struck dumb, and not able to open their mouths against the Lord and against his Christ. They will no longer be able to object to that gracious plan of redemption, by which our God decreed to bring many sons unto glory: but all iniquity —all—without exception—every infidel champion, every treasonable society, every congregation of rebels, shall stop their mouths. Lord, when are we to see this much desired day? Oh when shall the blasphemers of Jesus be silent? when shall it be no longer said, that God our Saviour is not self-existent, and equal in every perfection and attribute with the Father? When shall the infidel cease to tread under foot our most adorable God, and the wicked cease to crucify him afresh? Not, I fear, till the end: for while there are evil men, there will be railing and blasphemy. But there will be a day when iniquity shall stop her mouth; and it is not far off: when our Lord shall come again in all his glory, then they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall see that the crucified Jesus is a God indeed; the lustre of his divine glory, infinitely beyond the brightness of the sun, will be to them insufferable; and confounded, abashed, silenced, they shall lay their hands upon their mouths. And when he pronounces the dreadful sentence upon them, never, never to be reversed, "Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" then they shall not have one word to object—all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

Until this great day come, it is every Christian's part and duty to defend his Redeemer's cause: but it is more particularly incumbent upon us, who have taken his commission, and are his ministers, to exert ourselves in his defence.

Actuated by zeal for his honour, and by love to these precious souls for whom he died, we should be unwearied in our labours. Every talent and gift with which we are blessed ought to be devoted to the promoting of his interest; and we should strive to bring as many as we possibly can over to it. And every person we gain is stopping one of the tongues of iniquity. And if we gain but few, yet we may bring such arguments in defence of the plan of redemption, that we may silence many. I hope the arguments in this psalm will silence some. If they were well considered, they would silence all. And therefore we must call upon men, and press them to consider what is here said: for the Holy Spirit, in the last words, requires it of us: "Whoso is wise, and will observe those things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." "Whoso is wise," has the true wisdom that is from above, "will observe those things," will carefully note and remark what is here said of the fall and recovery of mankind, of our state by nature and by grace. True wisdom consists in observing these two things—what we are in ourselves, and what we are in Christ—in a deep sense of our misery by sin, stirring us up to seek our remedy in the Redeemer. This is wisdom. And whosoever is thus wise unto salvation "shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," shall be able to apply what he understands of it to his own private use and benefit. The verb, in the original rendered "shall understand," is, in the conjugation, called *Hithpael*, which signifies "to act upon itself." Whoever observes those things properly, finds his own interest in them. He makes the understanding of them useful to himself. He does not study them as a science or theory, but as interesting points, in which he is nearly concerned, and which he therefore tries to bring home for his own private advantage. When he hears of the mercies of the Lord Jesus, recorded in this psalm, he desires to partake of them. When he hears of the great deliverances vouchsafed to sinful ruined man, he studies to have his own share in them. What is said of these persons, who wandered out of the way in the wilderness, and fell into the bondage of sin, and were afflicted with its diseases, and troubled like a stormy sea with its continual tempests—all this he knows was his own case; and therefore what follows, of their flourishing state after Christ delivered them, may be his also, if he cry unto the Lord, as they did, for help. And he never ceases praying and seeking until the blessed Jesus bring him to the haven of the church, where he would be. And if he find the church diminished and brought low, he is not discouraged, but relies on the promises of his God, who will set him on high out of the reach of public calamity, when he comes to destroy an infidel church. He observes what is said in this psalm concerning those things, and he knows it to be true, by his own experience: and therefore the loving-kindness of the Lord, here recorded, is to him a subject of exceeding great joy, because he has tasted of it. Whoso is wise, will bring his knowledge of this psalm home to his own heart, and he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord—he shall be able to apply what he understands to his own benefit, and shall therefore be continually praising the Lord for his goodness, and declaring the wonders which he hath done for the salvation of men.

And here the Holy Spirit ends, recommending to us the observation of those things as the only wisdom, and exhorting us to apply what we understand of them to our own particular benefit, as the only use we can make of them. And if we can but observe and understand until we find our interest in them, then his design in recording this psalm will be answered, and we shall be thankful indeed: for thankfulness is only expressing with the mouth what the heart feels; and if the heart feels itself entitled to the blessings of redemption, it will be impossible to restrain the tongue from praising the almighty God and Redeemer of the world. The redeemed soul can no more forbear to praise its Redeemer, than the body can forbear to breathe so long as there is any life in it.

You may remember that I set out at first with a general plan of the whole psalm; and I need not here repeat it. You have heard each part explained, and have been shown how each tends to carry on the general plan. You have seen how regular and beautiful it is altogether, how important the subject, how strong and striking the arguments. It is indeed a masterly painting of our lost estate

by sin, which is here represented in various lights, the more forcibly to affect us, that, finding our distress, and being disposed to cry out for deliverance, we may be the more thankful to the Redeemer when he comes and brings us free and full redemption. For this end the Holy Spirit inspired the psalm, and for the same good purpose we have been considering it. God grant we may not have considered it in vain! It is a very weighty and solemn scripture, and contains the most powerful motives, which infinite Wisdom itself could propose, both to convince us of our misery without a Redeemer and also of our happiness in him: and these most powerful motives ought certainly to produce the greatest effects: they ought to fill our hearts with gratitude, and to raise us to the highest pitch of thankfulness; but if we have no better dispositions to be thankful to our blessed Redeemer than we have had before we heard these motives, there must be some very bad cause in our own hearts. What it is, I will endeavour to find out by applying myself,

First, To them who disbelieve the state of the case, as it is laid down in this psalm. The subject is thanksgiving. The motives used to excite in us a thankful temper are taken from the distressed estate of mankind by nature, and from their perfect recovery by grace. And no man can be unthankful who has seen himself in this lost condition, out of which he was brought by the free grace and mercy of the Redeemer. Such a person, I say, cannot be unthankful: because, while he retains the sense of his former misery, and of his present happiness, his mind is always in a thankful temper, and he must lose this sense before he can be indisposed to give thanks and praise to his redeeming God. This is the clear and plain state of the case. And the Holy Spirit supposes that the proper consideration of it would be sufficient to inspire us all with thankfulness; for when he comes to sum up the argument, he says, "Whoso is wise," whosoever has the true wisdom, "will observe these things," will observe the great points treated of in this divine composition, and will endeavour to understand them in a practical way, by applying what he knows of them to the state of his own soul. And whenever he is thus wise, and has this right understanding, then he will be full of thanks and praise to the God of his salvation. Now, there are men among us who disbelieve all this, who deny the lost and fallen estate of mankind, and who talk of, I know not what, fancied dignity and rectitude in poor sinful worms: and although they see the whole face of the earth covered with sin, yet they will not allow that man is sinful. And thus they deny the very evidence of their senses when it makes against infidelity, and are therefore greater enthusiasts than mistaken religion ever did produce. A poor creature who believes without evidence is indeed an enthusiast; but the infidel, who disbelieves against evidence, is got to the very top of enthusiasm. All deists are rank enthusiasts, and of the worst kind, because they can refuse to believe their own senses when they give evidence for Christianity. If there be any of them in this place, I must call upon them to observe those things which are recorded in this psalm. Consider why you disbelieve them. What reason, what motive, have you? If you would submit to the authority of scripture, it has determined that we are altogether corrupt and abominable, and that there is none of us righteous—no, not one. And if the experience of all ages had any weight with you, it comes in confirmation of the scripture authority. If plain matter of fact would convince, if reason was heard, you could not deny the corruption and depravity of human nature: for nothing is more certain than that the man lives not who never sinned. And if you see not that you yourselves are sinners, you are in great darkness. The eyes of your understanding are as yet blind. For what else can be the cause why you should have no eyes to see those things which are certain, yea, self-evident, to every Christian? You have no desire to find the truth of them. I appeal to your own hearts whether this be not the true cause. It is not want of evidence to convince, but want of desire in you to be convinced. Though the sun shine ever so bright and clear, yet it can give no light to them who shut their eyes against it. None are more blind than they who will not see. Nothing is more difficult than to persuade a man to believe what he is unwilling to believe. Reason and argument are seldom successful against such strong prejudices, especially when these prejudices fall in with our

natural corruptions, and flatter our sinful pride, and pay their court to the dignity of our base nature. In such a case something more powerful than reasoning is necessary. To convince such persons is a work too great for any agent but the grace of God; and if, after all that has been said, there are still men among us who see not sin and misery enough in their own hearts to want a Redeemer, may his good Spirit open their eyes before it be too late, and show them the truth of this psalm, and bring the doctrines contained in it home with power to their hearts, that they may find their lost estate by sin, and their perfect redemption through Jesus Christ. And, with my fervent prayers for them to our gracious God, I conclude for the present, and turn myself, in the

Second place, to them who believe what the Holy Spirit has here recorded concerning the fall of man, and who desire to experience the truth of what is here said concerning his recovery. Go on, my beloved brethren, you have set out well; persevere in your desires and prayers; for you are not far from the kingdom of heaven: it is God who hath begun a good work in you; let him finish it. And as the proper means thereto, wait upon God in all his holy ordinances, and particularly observe those things: remark the great points treated of in this divine hymn: study to understand them, and to apply them to your own hearts: labour to find your interest in them, and be assured that God will accompany the devout meditation of this scripture with his grace and blessing. Whoso is wise, will observe those things, says the Holy Spirit; therefore, if you would be wise, observe them. Mark, learn, and inwardly digest them. Try to find in them spiritual nourishment and support; and if you consider them with humility and prayer, they will be greatly blessed unto your souls. Wait and persevere in these holy exercises, and in God's own good time you will find reason to join with all his redeemed people, and to declare that he is loving to every man—to you in particular—and that his mercy endureth for ever. And these are the happy persons to whom I address my

Third and last remark. You, my Christian brethren, are prepared to join with me in offering up our tribute of thanks. You know what the Redeemer has done for your salvation, and you are grateful; but you are not grateful enough; neither can you be! Our most adorable God condescended to do such miracles for your redemption, that he deserves far more thanks than you can pay. Your best service—what a poor return is it for the riches of his love! and your highest strains of praise—how far do they fall below his infinite deserts! Alas! what can we do in the way of return, since all we have is his free gift, and all we hope for comes from his free grace. The inestimable riches of earth and heaven, while they proclaim the love of Jesus to us, yet prove that we cannot praise him enough for them. And, indeed, we never praise him so well as when we strive to do the best we can; but yet find how little it is we can do, how empty and worthless our best praises are. God knows, our present adoration and praise, in their utmost fervour, are very imperfect. And the Redeemer is so great and infinite, and so eternal are the blessings which he has freely conferred upon us, that our praises must be infinite and eternal if they rise up to his merit: for eternity itself will acknowledge that Jesus is above all blessing and praise; and therefore we are to praise him for ever. And how, then, can we rise up to the greatness of his merit in time, since there is to be no end of giving him thanks? But though our praises be imperfect, yet our Lord requires them, and we must return him the best we can: and when we know his love, and taste of his mercy, the heart will feel more than the tongue can utter, and then our praises will be acceptable, and his grace will render them sweet and delightful to us, and we shall esteem these moments to be the pleasantest in our lives which we spend in giving thanks to the blessed Jesus, the author of all our joys. And this kind of praise is something like the praises of heaven. It has their sincerity, but not their perfection. May God enable us to increase in both! Oh that we could raise our hearts, and exalt our affections, to that heavenly frame with which the glorified spirits are now praising the Lamb who sitteth upon the throne. The Holy Spirit can tune our hearts to join in harmony with theirs, though in a humbler strain: and let us now seek his gracious influence, and beg of him to bless these lectures upon thankfulness, and to make them the means of ren-

dering every one of us more thankful to our most adorable Redeemer. The means may be weak; but he who is to give them his blessing is almighty: and if we ask and seek it of him in humble prayer, he will supply all their defects by his grace. Let us, then, agree to request him to send his good Spirit into our hearts, that we may reap all the profit from the consideration of this divine hymn, which he intended it should administer to the faithful. And I know of no words more truly devout and pious, nor more proper wherewith to conclude these lectures, than the general thanksgiving of our church.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love, in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace through him, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we may show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

DISCOURSES

UPON

SOLOMON'S SONG.

DEDICATION.

To the Parishioners of St. Dunstan's in the West.

My dear Brethren,—I take this opportunity of acknowledging the many and great favours which I have received from you. My gratitude cannot better appear than in labouring, to the best of my power, in that station to which you have called me. Ever since you were pleased unanimously to choose me your Lecturer, I have endeavoured to discharge my duty as one who must give an account; and in what manner I discharge it, let these Sermons, which I now dedicate unto you, bear witness. There is a great and awful day at hand, in which the righteous scarcely shall be saved: and where then shall the wicked and ungodly appear? On this day, at the bar of the almighty Judge, I must stand, to give an account of my ministry among you: knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. He knoweth my heart; and he has seen how honestly I have preached the word, and how earnest I have been with him in prayer for a blessing upon it. Oh that I may deliver my own soul! And God grant you may deliver yours. You have heard me for some years, and chiefly upon the same subject. I hope you are not tired of hearing of the love of Jesus to poor helpless sinners: I am sure I am not tired of speaking upon it. The first sermon I preached among you was upon this text, 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." What I then determined in God's strength, I have thus far been enabled to perform. The great subject of all my preaching, as ye know, is Christ Jesus the Lord, inviting and calling careless sinners from the error of their ways, and pressing them to come to Christ for the pardon of their sins, for strength to subdue sin, and for grace to do good works, pleasant and acceptable unto God. This pardon, strength, and grace, are not to be had but from Christ. He alone has them to give; and that you might see the necessity of applying to him for them, I have been continually setting forth the misery of fallen man until he receives Christ Jesus the Lord for his Saviour and his God, and the complete happiness he enjoys after he has received him. With what success I have preached, you must give an account at the same awful bar at which I am to be tried, and before a Judge who is no respecter of persons. Oh that I may not appear against any of you in that great day! I have good reason to believe that many of you will then be (I pray God you may all then be!) my joy and crown of rejoicing. Happy will it be for you and me if I should see the Judge place you all on his right hand. And whether you were brought to this blessedness by my ministry, or not, if you do but enjoy it, I shall have cause to glorify God on your behalf.

My brethren, the time is short. Work while it is day: for the night cometh, in which no man can work. It is but a short day in which you have to finish the work of eternity; therefore give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Get possession and enjoyment of the present graces of salvation, without which you cannot have any well-grounded hope of eternal salvation. Jesus must save you from the guilt and save you from the dominion of sin; he must justify you by his righteousness, and sanctify you by his Spirit, before you can see the face of God with joy in his kingdom of glory. And have you then received these graces from him? This, my beloved brethren, is the most interesting question you can put to yourselves. Upon the decision of it depends an eternity of happiness or misery. Have you received these graces, or not? May he that teacheth man wisdom teach you to answer it to yourselves as you will answer it to him. May he lead you into all truth, save you from all sin, enable you to live to his glory, and make you happy in his love here, in time and in eternity!

God knoweth that this is the prayer of my heart. When that solemn day shall come, in which all secrets shall be laid open, then it will be known with what view I have written this Dedication. God grant my design in it may be answered! and may it then appear that you have reaped the profit from it which I most heartily desired! Having taken this occasion of thanking you for all temporal favours, my love to your souls would not let me lose an opportunity of speaking a word for Christ, although it was out of the pulpit. He has unsearchable, inestimable, and eternal riches in his power: and to persuade you to seek them has been and shall be the labour, and to entreat him to bestow them upon you shall be the prayer, of

Your faithful minister and servant in the Lord Jesus,

WILLIAM ROMAINE.

PREFACE TO THE DISCOURSES.

READER,—I here offer thee a volume of sermons upon some part of the Song of Songs. They were composed and preached at a time when I had some thoughts of treating the whole book in a plain practical way; but that design being laid aside, I have made some of the sermons public, hoping they may be the means of removing men's prejudices, and of reconciling their minds to this sweet portion of God's holy word.

It is a certain, but a melancholy matter of fact, that there has been more ridicule wasted upon the Song than upon any other portion of God's word. And we need not marvel at it. The devil has a particular spite against this book: he hates the subject, and he hates the composition. He cannot bear to hear of man's being restored to that fellowship and communion with God which himself once had, but can never hope for again: and therefore this treatise upon it is the object of his most devilish malice, and he is always stirring up his agents to write and to speak contemptibly of it. And he has been too successful in his temptation. Many persons fell into it because it flattered their pride. They set up themselves for judges of all subjects, divine as well as human, and made their reason the criterion of all truth. They tried this book by their reason, and they did not understand it; therefore they thought nobody did. Upon the force of this conclusion they took a general license to ridicule it; but the conclusion is not logical: for certainly the book may be intelligible, although they do not understand it. Modest reason would incline them to be of this opinion, because many learned men, in every age, have thought it intelligible, and many good men, without much learning, have understood it. The true cause of which was this: they understood the subject treated of in this book, which the enemies of it did not.

A deaf man is as good a judge of a fine piece of music, as a man who has no real heart-love for God is of a treatise upon the love of God; for, as he has no knowledge of the subject, how can he understand what is written upon it? If a man ignorant of mathematics were to take up Sir Isaac Newton's Principia, and to cry out, What stuff is this? Who can make any thing of these strange lines and figures, and these A's and B's? a great mathematician standing by would pity the poor man's ignorance. In like manner, when any person takes up a book upon communion with God, and either does not believe there is such a thing, or has had no experience of it, how can he understand what is written? It must appear to him mere jargon and gibberish; and if he has a talent at ridicule, here is a tempting occasion for him to display it: whereas the fault is not in the book, but in the man who reads it. It may be a perfect composition; and he may be no judge of it. The book is plain enough to them who are properly qualified to read it. If you understand the true genius of the tongue in which it was written, and have some insight into the subject of which it treats, it will then be as intelligible as any other portion of scripture; but the enemies of this book understand neither of these particulars. They are not qualified to judge, and yet they venture to condemn it: for

First, They are not acquainted with the nature of the Hebrew tongue, without which no man should pretend to be a critic upon the writings of the Old Testament. If any person should write professedly against Homer, and try to prove there was no genius, invention, or sublimity in his poems, with what contempt would the learned treat his performance, especially if they knew that this ignoramus did not understand one word of Greek, no nor one letter. If such an attack upon Homer appears ridiculous to men of learning, how much more ridiculous should an attack of the same nature appear upon a treatise in Hebrew! because the Hebrew is more difficult to be translated, word for word, than any Greek author can be. It has some peculiar properties and idioms, which no other language has, with which every critic should be acquainted, lest he should raise objections that would only betray his own ignorance. The Hebrew is a fixed language. It is not, like ours, arbitrary and changeable. We are continually gaining some new word, or dropping some obsolete one, or affixing some new idea to a word, which we have done remarkably in the word charity. When our Liturgy was compiled, and afterwards, when the present translation of the Bible was made, charity signified love; but now we use it for nothing but giving of alms. If you were to use it in its ancient sense, and to talk of the charity of God, you would not be understood. But the Hebrew is free from these imperfections. It is fixed in nature, and cannot change, unless nature should. Every word stands for some material and sensible object, which God created to represent and to give us ideas of some correspondent and spiritual object. Like as in parables there is an outward and literal sense, by which an inward and spiritual meaning is conveyed, so is it in every Hebrew word. And a critic should understand Hebrew upon this plan. He should be acquainted with the genius of the Hebrew tongue, and with its manner of expressing spiritual things under their appointed images in nature. And it is more necessary he should have this knowledge, in order to understand this book, because it is the worst translated of all scripture. Our translators have not failed more in any part of the Old Testament than they have here. Instead of giving us the spiritual meaning of the words, they have seldom given us any thing but the literal sense; and sometimes they have given us the Hebrew word without any translation at all. If they had translated the prophecy of Isaiah in the same injudicious manner, it would have been as abstruse as this book is. I hope to see it made as intelligible as the prophecy of Isaiah. There are several persons, at present in our church, of great leisure, and great abilities; and it is much to be wished they would employ them in explaining this book. The most proper method they could take seems to me to settle, first, the true literal sense of every word in the Song, and then, as it is entirely a spiritual book, treating of communion with God, to fix the spiritual idea to each word; and where we have not a proper word in English to express the full sense of a Hebrew word, they might give it in a short paraphrase.

Whenever this is done, the mouths of our ignorant mockers will be stopped, and it will appear that all their objections arose from their ignorance.

Thus the enemies of this book are ignorant of the true genius of the Hebrew tongue, in which it is written; and they borrow their arguments against it, not from the faults of the book itself, but from the faults in the translation; and they are also ignorant of the subject upon which it treats. It is one of the deep things of God, which the natural man cannot understand. He has none of this love to God which is here described; nor can he attain it by any means in his own power. It is a love that comes down from God. He is the giver of it; and it is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, who bestows the comforts of it upon them that are pardoned and reconciled to the Father in the Son of his love, and that can therefore truly say, with the apostle John, "We know and have believed the love that God hath to us." Whoever sits down to read this Book, be he ever so learned in other matters, yet, if he has no knowledge of God's love to him, he cannot understand what he reads. The objectors of this Book are so far from pretending to have any of this experimental love of God, that they laugh at it, and ridicule it; whereby they plainly declare that they are not judges of the subject upon which this Book treats, and therefore they are not fit to sit in judgment upon it,

These are the two principal reasons why this Book is so little understood and so much ridiculed. I need not enlarge upon them here, because they are often taken notice of in the sermons; to which I refer the reader. When I first thought of making them public, I did not foresee how seasonable they would be. It appears to me quite providential that these sermons on the love of God should be published just at this time, when I am furiously attacked by a nameless writer, and charged with preaching nothing but hell and damnation. It would have been as true a charge if he had said I always preached in Hebrew. This volume shall answer for me. Here my doctrine is, Believe, and thou shalt be saved: love God, and thou shalt be happy. May He who has this saving belief, and this happy love to give, for his mercy's sake, bestow them upon this my bitter enemy and open persecutor!

I have nothing more to add, but to entreat the Blesser of all nations to accompany the reading of these sermons with his blessing. May he water them with the dew of his heavenly grace, and render them useful and profitable to every person into whose hands they may fall. Reader, if thou findest any unction from the Holy One in them, and reapest any benefit from them, give God the glory, and pray for the author. Thou canst not do me any service which I more want or value, than thy prayers. Pray that the grace of Christ may do more in me, and that I may do more for Christ: and in return I will pray for thee, that the Spirit of the living God may enable thee to understand this divine Song, and to experience the comforts of its doctrine; and then thou wilt be in possession of the greatest happiness thou canst enjoy on this side of heaven.

Upon revising these sheets for a new edition of the following sermons, I had great reason to bless the Lord God that my views of this subject were the same as they were several years ago—only confirmed by long experience. It is a good thing to be established in the truth, and by constant use to get into holy and happy practice. When the believer has received Christ, it is his privilege to be growing up into him in all things—flourishing like a palm-tree, and mounting up like the cedar in Lebanon. Certain doctrines are then not to be disputed. The essential glory of Immanuel—The absolute perfection of his saving work—The effectual application of it to the consciences, to the hearts, and to the lives of believers by the Holy Spirit—in these it is good and right that there should be no variableness nor shadow of turning. Jesus Christ, and his work, and his Spirit, and his fulness, being the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Much has been written and spoken against these sermons, as if I had therein made too much of Christ. I think it impossible. His person is above all blessing and praise. His salvation is infinitely perfect, and contains an eternal fulness of all graces and glories. His promises are exceeding great and exceeding precious—already made good to him, as the head, and by him made good to all his people. When the Spirit of life that is in him sets them free from the law

of sin and of death, they are pardoned, and righteous, and holy, and blessed in the Beloved. Which of them can come up to the greatness of such a subject? Who can show forth all the praises of such a Jesus? I cannot. Instead of thinking that I have spoken too highly of him, I am very sensible of my many and great failings. May the Glorifier of Jesus enable me to speak more worthily of him in earth and heaven!

DISCOURSE I.

CHAP. i. verse 1.

The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

GOD is love. The whole scripture is a history of the wonders which his love has done for the children of men. It was love which first gave being to the universe. The same continued love has preserved it. But the description of the works of creation and preservation takes up a small part of the sacred volume. The great subject of it is redeeming love. In this sweet and amiable light God has proposed himself to our consideration. When his justice was offended at the transgression of his holy law, his love contrived how to get glory to every divine attribute, by pardoning and saving the transgressor. He had provided the covenant of grace, in which was the richest display of his infinite love. In this covenant he glories. He sets it forth and recommends it as the greatest work of God, and has revealed the Old Testament and the New to demonstrate to sinners, that our redeeming God is love. When Moses desired to see his glory, he did not refer him to the works of the creation, or to the instances which he had seen of his almighty power; but he sent him to the mercies of redemption, in which he might have the strongest evidences of God's glory. He proclaimed himself as the Old Testament God, under the style and title of—"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. This description was fulfilled when the brightness of divine glory was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. When he came into the world to save men from their sins, then his disciples beheld his glory, and believed that God was love; then they saw the completion of what was written in all the scriptures, more especially in the Song of Songs, concerning the greatness of redeeming love: for though all scripture treats largely of it, yet this is an entire treatise upon the subject. It contains a lively description of the perfect love which our redeeming God has for returning sinners, and of the grateful affection which his love stirs up in them. He relates what graces and blessings he would bestow upon them; and they express their happiness in the enjoyment of his graces and blessings. He finds them black and deformed sinners; and he presents them fair and without spot in the sight of God; and they, knowing him to be their Beloved and their Friend, see him altogether lovely. Upon this subject they discourse, setting forth the happiness of their mutual love.

The Jews call this book "the Holy of Holies;" and so it is to every one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart. Here he converses with the most holy persons and things, and has a foretaste of those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. But here the carnal and unregenerate man reads at the peril of his own soul. He enters as it were into the holy of holies, which was death by the law. He is ignorant of God's being in this place. He puts not off his shoe, although it be holy ground. He puts not off, concerning his former conversation, the old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and who neither does understand the things of God treated of in this book, nor can understand them, for want of a spiritual discernment. He cannot know them, says the word of truth, because they are spiritually discerned; and therefore, if he meddle with them, he must profane them. The more sacred they are, the more contrary are they to his nature. The more wholesome they are to the

spiritual man, the more poison will the natural man extract from them; and that which is a savour of life proves to him a savour of death.

Away, then, ye profane. Come not near to the holy of holies, nor presume to look into it, lest ye die. You are no more fit to read this book than you are to partake of the sacred elements at the Lord's table. With your carnal unregenerate hearts you will read the one and partake of the other, to your greater condemnation. Oh! keep back then, and presume not to look into, or to judge of the sacred mysteries of this divine Song. But if you will venture to read it, and to ridicule it, remember that it is one of the treasures of divine wisdom; and though you may level your wit against a Song of Solomon's, yet it falls upon the almighty God who inspired it. And are you arrived at such desperate wit, as to break jests upon God, and to make sport with his omnipotence? Oh! fear and tremble for yourselves, lest, while you are shooting up your arrows, even your bitter words against heaven, God should send them back upon your own heads with a swift destruction. May his grace show you your danger, and dispose you to leave your sins! and whenever you are stirred up to seek pardon and peace in Christ Jesus, then you will begin to understand this book; and when you have any experience of God's love to you, then you will find comfort and profit in reading it.

I propose, through God's assistance, to treat of some parts of it in a practical way: and to make our future consideration of these particular passages more plain and easy, I shall at present lay before you a general plan of the book. And this we have in the words now read. They are the title prefixed to it by its divine Author, and serve as a short comment to explain its principal use. I shall therefore endeavour,

First, To settle the true sense and meaning of the words—from whence we may gather,

Secondly, That the scope and design of this sweet portion of scripture is to describe the mutual love of Christ and his church.

Thirdly, I shall bring some arguments to prove that this is the scope and design of it: and,

Lastly, I will reduce these truths to practice, and make some useful inferences from them.

And first, The words now read are the title, which the Holy Spirit prefixed to the book, that they might serve as a key to open its scope and design. The Song of Songs which is concerning Solomon, which treats of Solomon. A song, in the scripture usage of the term, consists in setting forth the praises of God. It is a hymn to his honour and glory. The spiritual songs of scripture have no other object but the God of love, and no other end but to raise and exalt our ideas of him and of his works, especially of his works of grace, whereby he brings lost sinners to a happy sense and sweet experience of his love. St. Paul has given us a short, but it is a very full, comment upon the scripture songs, Col. iii. 16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord." Hence we learn the nature of these songs; they are the words of Christ, revealed by him and concerning him; and in them we are to teach and to admonish one another, to the end that the word of Christ may dwell in us richly in all wisdom; for they are spiritual songs; and he that sings them must have grace in his heart: without this qualification he will sing the song of fools; and he must also sing "to the Lord," to the glory and honour of his holy name. After this apostolical rule, we may explain this song. It is the word of Christ, revealed by him, and concerning him, and we are to teach and to admonish one another in the things of Christ out of this song. We have the apostle's command to do it, with this encouragement, that the word of Christ may dwell in us richly in all wisdom: for this song is of a spiritual nature, treating of spiritual persons and things, and cannot be sung aright unless grace be in the heart, nor will profit unless we have an eye to the Lord in every word of it. If we look off from him to any lower object, we not only lose sight of its scope and design, but we also form a judg-

ment of it contrary to the judgment of the Holy Spirit, who has exalted this above the rest of the scripture songs, and has dignified it with the high title of "The Song of Songs." There are many divine songs; but this is, by way of eminence, above, and in copiousness comprehends, them all. It is the sum and substance of them, and the point to which they tend. God is the subject of every spiritual song: and what can we find in God which calls for louder songs of praise than that love which is above all his works? which was before them, for it gave them their being; which is with them to preserve it; and will be with them to the boundless ages of eternity. Surely a hymn upon this exalted subject deserves the title of "The Song of Songs;" especially when the divine person, of whom he treats, is considered in it under his most amiable character, and set forth under the style and title of the Prince of Peace; for this is the meaning of the word Solomon in Hebrew. The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's, our translation reads; but the Hebrew particle, put before Solomon, is the sign, not of the genitive, but of the dative case, and is frequently rendered, concerning or touching such a person or thing. Thus, Isaiah v. 1, "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard." And again, Psalm xlv. 1, "I speak of the things which I have made, touching the king." It is also several times rendered concerning, as Gen. xix. 21, "I have accepted thee concerning this thing; and in Jer. xlix. it is frequently translated concerning. In this sense it is here used. The Song of Songs which is concerning Solomon—not King Solomon, but the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, of whom Solomon was a type and figure, as it appears from Psalm lxxii., which has the same title as the Song. It is inscribed to Solomon, is concerning him, and treats of him; but several passages of it can be applied to none but Jesus, the Prince of Peace, of whom only it could be truly said, that he had dominion from one end of the earth to the other; that all kings should fall down before him, and all nations should serve him; that he should save the souls of the needy, and should redeem their souls; and that prayer should be made unto him continually, and all nations should call him blessed. These things cannot be spoken of King Solomon; but they are strictly true of the Prince of Peace, Jesus, the Lord of life and Redeemer of sinners. Therefore the title of Psalm lxxii. has the same meaning as the title of the Song; and when the Holy Spirit says, "The Song of Songs, which is concerning the Lord and giver of peace," he would plainly point out to us the principal use of this scripture. It is a treatise concerning the God of love, under the character of the Prince of Peace, describing how happy we are in Christ Jesus, when we, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ: for he is our peace. And this leads me to consider,

Secondly, The scope and design of this sweet portion of scripture. It is to describe the peace which Christ has given to the faithful soul, and sets forth the happiness of the soul in the enjoyment of it. Christian peace is the fruit of that love which the Holy Spirit has manifested to sinners, and flows from a sense of their reconciliation with God, through Jesus Christ their Lord; of which the apostle thus speaks: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And when we have thus tasted how gracious the Lord is, then we cannot but love him who first loved us; and the sense of this love fills the mind with joy and peace. In this order St. Paul has placed these graces: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." Our love is by nature placed upon a wrong object. Sin alienated our hearts from God. Our affections are turned from him, and seek for happiness in creature-comforts. And although daily disappointed, yet they continue to seek it, until the Holy Spirit convince them that they are seeking happiness in a vain shadow, and disquieting themselves in vain. And when he has shown them that nevertheless they may be completely happy in God the Saviour, and has stirred them up earnestly to desire his salvation, then he has prepared them to read this divine treatise with profit; the scope and design of which is to set before us Jesus Christ as the only excellent and lovely object of our affections: and when we, by the eye of faith, behold him, and by the

power of faith are united to him, then we know what the apostle meant when he said, "To them that believe, Jesus is precious;" and we can take up the words of the believer in the Song, and declare that he is altogether lovely—the chiefest among ten thousand. And thus every other object will fade away in our esteem, and grow mean and worthless in comparison of God our Saviour; whereby we shall be able to enter into the spirit of the Song. We shall know something of that spiritual fellowship and communion of which it treats: for it dwells largely upon the mutual joys and mutual praises of Christ and the believing soul, describing the complete happiness which they have in each other. This is the general plan of the book, which is very well expressed in the argument put before it, in the Bible that was in use in Queen Elizabeth's time: "In this Song, Solomon, by most sweet and comfortable allegories and parables, describeth the perfect love of Jesus Christ, the true Solomon and King of Peace, and the faithful of his church, which he hath sanctified, and appointed to be his spouse, holy, chaste, and without reprehension: so that here is declared the singular love of the bridegroom toward the bride, and his great and excellent benefits wherewith he doth enrich her, of his pure bounty and grace, without any of her deservings. Also the earnest affection of the church, which is inflamed with the love of Christ, desiring to be more and more joined to him in love, and not to be forsaken for any spot or blemish that is in her."

This was the judgment of our reformers: and they were not singular in it, as I purpose to show under my third head, which was to bring some arguments to prove that this is the scope and design of the book.

The first argument, which would occur to every serious person, is, the universal consent of expositors. All the Jewish writers suppose it to treat of the spiritual union between Christ and the believer. All Christian writers understand it in the same sense. And the unanimous opinion of all learned and good men ought certainly to have great weight with us: for the scope and design of the book must be very plain and clear, since there never was any dispute about it in the church of God. This, then, being the received sense, I may proceed to examine upon what principles it came to be so universally received. I suppose men were led to consider it in this light from the established method of explaining scripture: and this is the second argument I shall use.

The scriptures are suited to man in his present state. While he is here in the body, he cannot converse immediately with spiritual objects: he can only see them comparatively, as compared to and illustrated by material and sensible objects. The scriptures take this method of instruction. They teach us spiritual and heavenly things, under their expressive images of nature. Whoever considered the scriptures in this light, could not rest in the literal sense of the Song. He knew that all scripture had a spiritual sense; and therefore, in reading the Song, he would consider what the spiritual sense could be; and he could not easily mistake it when he recollected what was the one great end and aim of all scripture. Every part of it was to lead men to some knowledge of Christ; which is the third argument tending to open to us the scope and design of this divine book.

Search the scriptures, says he of whom they write; for these are they which testify of me. The Song is part of these scriptures; and therefore it testifies of Christ. And what other testimony does it bear of him than in setting forth the love which he has for his faithful people?

The testimony of Jesus, says St. John, is the spirit of prophecy. If you understand the prophetical spirit of this book, you will read it in the testimony of Jesus: therefore, if you do not see how it bears testimony to him, you have no insight into its prophetical spirit.

Again we read, "That the holy scriptures are able to make a man wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus: for all scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. From whence I infer that the Song, being part of scripture, is given by inspiration of God, and was therefore given that it might make the man of God wise unto salvation; and this it does by establishing him in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Another proof may be taken from the forty-fifth Psalm, which is a song of loves.

The subject and the manner of the composition are the same with this divine book. They treat of the love of Christ to his church, and after the manner of a dialogue; and the forty-fifth Psalm is applied to Christ by an infallible interpreter. St. Paul, in the 1st of the Hebrews, and the 8th verse, says, that it was written of God the Son: from whence we may conclude that the Song, being upon the same subject, and drawn up in the same manner, treats also of the love of God the Son to his faithful people. And to confirm the interpretation of these more general proofs, I may mention a fourth argument, taken from those places of scripture wherein Christ is spoken of in the very terms used in the Song. The scripture often speaks of him under the character of the bridegroom. In the 25th of St. Matthew we have the parable of the ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom, who, in the 13th verse, is called the son of man. In the 5th of the Ephesians, St. Paul is treating of the love and union between husbands and wives; and in the 32nd verse he says, "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and his church," in the same manner, and with the same expressions, which are used in the Song, and which are carried on through the New Testament: for thus we read, in one of the last scenes of the Revelation of St. John, that the multitude of the heavenly host cried aloud, as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth: Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And in the 21st chapter St. John informs us who the bride, the Lamb's wife, is—the church, the Jerusalem that is above, which is the spiritual mother of us all, even of every one of us who shall be so happy as to be called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

From these authorities it appears to me undeniably evident that it is common in scripture to speak of Christ in the very same manner that he is spoken of in the Song: and therefore, summing up all these arguments together, considering that the expositors, Jews and Christians, are agreed about the plan and design of it, and that the received sense is agreeable to the general rule for interpreting scripture, and is founded upon clear reasoning from many particular passages, and more especially from those passages wherein express mention is made of Christ's love to the faithful, under the very images used to represent it in the Song, we may certainly from hence conclude that the scope and design of this sweet portion of scripture is to set forth in the most lively and affecting manner the mutual joys and mutual praises of Christ and the faithful.

Having thus far endeavoured to settle and establish the principal use of this sacred book, I come, in the fourth and last place, to reduce what has been said into practice, and to draw some useful inferences from it.

The Song, as you have heard, is of the nature of a parable, wherein spiritual things are described by material. It is one of the offices of the wisdom that is from above, to understand a parable and the interpretation thereof. I have endeavoured to give you the interpretation of one of the sweetest of all the divine parables. And are there any of you, my brethren, who, after what has been said, are not yet reconciled to this book? Do you think that it had better have been left out of the sacred volume? Consider, that your opinion weighs nothing against the unanimous consent of the church of God, and your opinion is founded upon your ignorance of the things of God. If you understand this book, you could not think meanly of it; but, in order to understand it, you must have some experience of that love of which it treats: having never tasted of it, you cannot enter into the spirit of the descriptions of it here made by Christ and by the faithful. Instead, then, of looking into the book for matter of censure, look into your own hearts, and beg of God to show you how much you stand in need of having the love of Christ shed abroad in them; and whenever he enables you to say with the apostle, Jesus Christ loved me and gave himself for me, then you will taste and see how exceedingly sweet every image and description is in this divine Song.

If you cannot be persuaded to desire the love of God may be shed abroad in your hearts, you will entertain a mean opinion of this treatise upon it. But for the sake of your dear and immortal souls, suffer not yourselves to speak irreve-

rently of it. If God ever revealed himself to man, this is part of his revelation. The holy and eternal Spirit, who inspired all scripture, spake this by his unerring wisdom. He is the author; and the subject is the deep things of God. Let not then a disrespectful word come out of your mouths against it. But if you will suffer your wit to run into licentiousness, remember that you ridicule this book at the peril of your souls. You are guilty of blasphemy against the Most High. And how can you think it safe to jest upon the Almighty, and to make sport with his omnipotence? Why will you set God at defiance, and add fresh fuel to his wrath, as if all your other sins would not sink you deep enough into the pit of destruction? If you have any love left for your eternal interests, forbear this desperate wit; and beg of God to enlighten the darkness of your understandings, that you may see the scope and design of this sacred Song. And to those persons who desire this, I make my second remark.

You do not clearly comprehend the things written in this book, but you desire to comprehend them. If this desire be from God, it will put you upon praying for the experience of that love which is here treated of. You may possibly come at the meaning of some things in it, but you cannot know them practically nor profitably, until you are taught them of God. You cannot tell what the love of God is until it be shed abroad in your heart. No description can make you acquainted with it: and therefore look up to God, who has it to give. Ask him, out of the riches of his grace, to bestow it upon you: and when he gives you the comfortable sense of it, then you will have the best key to open the mysteries of this divine Song. And for your encouragement in seeking, remember that this love is free. Though it be inestimable, yet it is to be had without money and without price. God had no motive to show it to sinners but his own inherent mercy, and he waits for no merit or qualification in them: for it is to supply the want of all merit and qualification: and he has already begun to bestow the riches of this free love upon you by making you sensible of your want of it, and by putting you upon seeking for it. Wait upon him, then, in the ways of his ordinances, and he will finish what he has begun. He will enable you to love him, because he first loved you. Ask this out of a due sense of your unworthiness, and the Father, for the sake of his Son, will shed abroad his love in your hearts by the Holy Ghost. And thus he will bring you into the happy number of those believers, to whom I make my third and last inference.

You, my Christian brethren, can read this sweet portion of scripture with delight and profit. You know it to be true by your own experience. You look upon Jesus Christ in the light here described: for he is your peace, and you find his dealings with your souls are the very same which the Song mentions. For what the Song says of the church in general must be true of every individual who is a member of it: for the church is nothing more than a congregation of believers united by faith, and by the bond of the Spirit to Christ, the head of the spiritual body, and by love to one another. United to him, as the members are to the head, and united to one another, as the members are in the same body. What, therefore, is spoken in the Song of the whole church, as the spouse of Christ, is true of every particular Christian. And what is said of the church is briefly this: in the first chapter, the church expresses a strong desire for nearer communion with Christ; and then there follows some declining of her affection. After this, we have her recovery—a regaining of her first love: and yet she afterwards declines again in her affection, her love grows cold, and she falls into a state of desertion. Christ hides his presence from her more than he did in her former coldness; and this continues until, perceiving Christ's constant affection to her, notwithstanding her unkind treatment of him, she recovers, and follows him more closely, and with a more constant love than before.

These passages agree with the experience of the best Christians in the course of their own lives; and therefore the Song is not a dark unintelligible book to them. They find it to be an experimental treatise upon the love of Jesus Christ to his people. And all of you, my Christian brethren, understand it in this light. You have read it with care, praying the holy inspirer of it to enlighten your understandings, that you may see its true sense and spiritual meaning; and he has opened to you the truth of its descriptions. The Holy Spirit has drawn you

to Christ, and has made you happy in the sense of his love, and thus he has given you the best comment upon the Song. The more he enables you to taste of this love, the more clearly will you understand the Song. You will have the greater insight into it, the nearer access you have to the Father, with confidence through the faith that is in Christ: for what is written concerning communion with God must certainly be best understood by those who live in close communion with him. This is your privilege. Remember how great and high it is, and act worthy of it. You have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the bond of this communion, and therefore it is called the "communion of the Holy Ghost." Oh beware! then, of every thing that would grieve or offend him. As his is a holy office, entirely relating to holiness, nothing can displease this Holy Spirit so much as sin. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity. The least thought of sin offends him: for it is sin that pollutes his sacred residence, and defiles the temple of the heart. Sin makes him withdraw and hide the light of his countenance, and withhold the sweet sense of his comfortable presence. Oh! beware, then, as you love your own peace of mind, as you love your God and his glory, as you love Jesus Christ and his salvation, beware of the least approach to sin. Pray, watch, strive against it. Resist unto blood striving against sin. Wait upon God in all his ordinances to get power over it. And the more you are dead to sin and alive unto God, the nearer fellowship will you have with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and as this fellowship is the subject of the Song, you will therefore understand it the better, and experience more of its sweetness.

My Christian brethren, you have tasted of its sweetness. You know the loving-kindness of the Lord; and if you would have the constant abiding sense of it, earnestly beseech the Holy Spirit to keep you from offending him in thought, word, and deed. Entreat him to give you grace never to grieve him. Stand in awe, and sin not. Sin is your great enemy. Nothing makes God hide his face from you, but sin. All the darkness, and blindness, and depravity that are in the soul, concerning the things of God, come from sin: from it came all misery. Oh, watch then, and pray always against it. Pray that you may be kept from the works of darkness, and from every error and vice which would cloud the understanding, and hinder your reading this portion of scripture with profit. Look up to the Spirit of wisdom, and entreat him to open to you the true sense and meaning of the Song, and to give you the happy experience and comforts of its doctrines. And that we may all receive the benefits from it which he intended it should administer to his people, let us humbly ask it of him in the words of our church, which hath taught us to pray, saying,

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy scriptures (and this portion of them in particular which we have been considering) to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE II.

CHAP. i. ver. 4.

Draw me: we will run after thee.

THE Saviour of sinners is God and man united in one Christ. As God, he has all the perfection of heaven; and as man he has all the beauties of this earth. He has every grace of time, and every blessing of eternity, which ought to draw and to attract our love. But while men are in their natural unregenerate state, they see none of his perfections and beauties. They behold no form nor comeliness in him that they should desire him. The world and the things of it appear more desirable than he does. The base perishing joys of sense have the

entire possession of their affections. Sin is more lovely in their eyes than God the Saviour; and they give up their hearts to its enjoyments, in preference to him and his heaven. While they continue to place their love on such unworthy objects, they are incapable of judging of this divine Song: for they are not only strangers, but also enemies to that love of which it treats; and how, then, can they see the beauties of its composition, or judge of the justness of its sentiments? So long as they love sin, they cannot love Jesus Christ; and therefore they cannot love the sweet descriptions in this poem, which set forth the happiness of loving him above all things. But when their eyes are opened to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and their hearts are once drawn from the love of sin, when they have found that it cannot make them happy, then they are glad to hear of a Saviour; and when they have tasted of his love, then they begin to understand and to admire the beauties of this divine Song; and the more they love him, the greater beauties do they find in it.

The subject of it is the union betwixt Christ and the faithful soul. In this, all the expositors of scripture, ancient and modern, are agreed. It is a spiritual Song, composed in the manner of a dialogue. The speakers are Christ and the believer. The inspirer of it is the holy and eternal Spirit, who delivered it by the mouth of Solomon. He knew it to be true by his own experience, as every believer does to this day. After he had left God, he sought for happiness in the creatures, but was disappointed. He turned from one object to another, tried the whole circle of worldly enjoyments, and, as he passed on, he wrote upon each, vanity and vexation of spirit. It pleased God to show him his error, and to make use of him as a proper person to warn others from setting their hearts upon any object but God: for if Solomon could not find happiness in the world, what can the man do that cometh after the king? This is the subject of the book of Ecclesiastes. After Solomon had turned from these worldly vanities, to serve the living God, he wrote this divine Song, to show what true happiness he had found, and every believer will find, in being united to Christ in the bonds of love and affection. The Holy Spirit had drawn his heart from the love of all inferior objects to God the Redeemer, and had given him faith to see his own interest in what the Redeemer was to do and suffer for him. By these bonds the union was formed and perfected. The Holy Spirit, on Christ's part, and faith on the believer's, united them to each other. And the believer here describes what happy effects flowed to him from this union; and Christ describes the delight he had in it. The descriptions of their mutual love and happiness run through this Song of Loves.

The awakened soul begins with expressing its desire to receive some sensible tokens of Christ's love, in the second verse; setting forth the excellency of it in the third; and at the same time its own utter inability and insufficiency to attain it, unless Christ would be pleased to draw the affections from all other objects unto himself: "Draw me," as it follows in the fourth verse, "and we will run after thee." Draw me, Lord Jesus, from the love of the world, and the things of it. Draw me from the love of sin and self. I feel my bondage; I find that I am a slave, and am without strength to deliver myself. Oh draw me, then, by the sweet impulse of thy good Spirit from my bondage and slavery. And when thou art pleased to set my feet at liberty, then we will run after thee —we, in the plural number: for when the heart is once drawn after Christ, it commands all the faculties; and they which could not stir before, now run; they which had no strength now run against all opposition; they which were enemies to Christ now run after him with joy in the ways of his commandments. Draw me by thy grace, and we, every faculty of soul and body, will obey, we will follow the divine attraction, and thou shalt be our God and king ruling over us, and getting thyself glory by setting up thy kingdom within us. May these be the desires of all your hearts, while we are here met together! May the Lord Jesus draw your thoughts from every vain and sinful object, and keep them fixed upon this subject! Oh that he may send his good Spirit to open your understandings clearly to see, and to influence your affections readily to receive,

First, The reasons which induced the awakened sinner to desire Christ would draw him.

Secondly, The scripture method of drawing the soul unto Christ.

Thirdly, The certain effects which follow upon its being drawn. And then,

Fourthly, I will reduce these particulars to practice, and will apply them closely, as God shall enable me, to every one of your consciences.

And First, We need not look farther then the text for the reasons which induced the awakened sinner to desire Christ would draw him. He found he could not run after Christ unless he was drawn: for although God be the fountain of all good to his creatures, and the God-man Christ Jesus be the fountain of all good to his sinful creaturcs, yet they are not willing to go and receive good at his hands. Sin has corrupted all the faculties of the soul, and has turned and alienated them from God; insomuch that they leave God to seek good in the crcature, and idolize it by placing their happiness in it. The God of this world, and his riches and honours, and pleasures, have possession of their hearts; and the God of heaven, who promises them heavenly riches, and honours, and pleasures, has none of their affections; nay they hate him. While they love present and sensual gratifications, they are haters of God. They hate him because their sinful nature is opposite to his perfect holiness, and because he has forbidden them these gratifications, which they are determined to enjoy; and they hate him the more, because he has threatened to punish them, and conscience informs them that they deserve the threatened punishment. This is the state of all men by nature. They are lovers of sin, and haters of God, Rom. i. 30. And until this hatred be conquered, how can they come to God with any kind of love? Their affections will lead them farther from him every step they take: and how can they return unless he draw them to himself? If they can but be convinced of the vanity and emptiness of all these creature-comforts, upon which they have set their hearts, and can see reason to think that God will be reconciled, and love them notwithstanding their former opposition to him, then they will be disposed to seek his love; but until they be convinced of these two truths, they cannot be drawn to seek happiness in God.

This is the plain doctrine of scripture. Our divine Lord and Master thus instructs his disciples, John vi. 44: "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." No man, be he ever so moral, civil, and learned, let him have ever so many natural gifts and acquired accomplishments, can come, has either will or power to come, unto me for the graces and blessings which I have to give, unless the Father which hath sent me draw him by the sweet attraction of his good Spirit.

Our church teaches the same doctrine, in her tenth article; "The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." Here we are taught that man by his fall is turned away from God, and has no strength to return, unless the grace of Christ go before to give him a good will, and then work with him when he has that good will. He has no strength in any of his faculties: they are all turned from God; and the grace of Christ alone is able to draw them back again. The understanding has no light. It is entirely in darkness, as to the things of God, Eph. iv. 18, and the eye of the mind can no more enlighten itself, than the eye of the body can enlighten itself without light. When the first ray of grace breaks in upon us, it finds us, as it did the heathens at the coming of Christ, sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. And unless the rays of his grace shine into the understanding, it cannot be enlightened. Christ is the only light of the world. He is, in the kingdom of grace, what the sun is in nature. Stop the influence of his bright beams, and the understanding will never see any reason to follow him, nor can the will choose him. The will of the natural man is depraved.

It has a wrong bias, and is directly opposite to the will of God, and never can desire to be reconciled, unless the Holy Spirit draw it.

But does not the Holy Spirit's thus drawing it destroy our free will? By no means: for it cannot destroy what is not. Fallen man has no free will but to sin: if that may be called free, "which is tied and bound with the chains of sin," as our church expresses it. The scripture is absolutely positive upon this point, declaring, Rom. viii. 7, "that the carnal mind," the will of our corrupt nature, "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," until it be delivered from the bondage and slavery of sin. It cannot be subject to the will of God unless his grace draw it to himself: for by nature it is drawn to sin. "The flesh always lusteth against the spirit," says the scripture. "Fallen man is of his own nature inclined to evil," as our ninth article teaches. We run fast enough into evil. We want nothing to draw us. Sin strikes upon our nature, and catches like a spark upon gunpowder. Surely we can all remember with what different tempers we used to go to the playhouse and to the church; how much greater delight we took in spending an evening over the devil's books, at an innocent game of cards, as his children call it, than in reading the word of God. And are there none of you who now find more joy in many things than you do in prayer? These are evident proofs that you are still governed by the will of the flesh, which, the scripture says, lusteth always against the spirit: and therefore how can a desire ever arise in it after God, or the things of God, unless Christ draw it to himself? But the worst part of our corruption consists in the depravity of our affections: for they are also governed by the will of the flesh, and are, according to the apostle, to be crucified, Gal. v. 24: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." And they that are not Christ's are still under the power of the affections and lusts of the flesh. The heart, which is the commanding faculty, is in them shut against God; but is open to receive sin, loves it, dotes upon it, yea, is so enamoured of it, as to prefer its short and empty joys to the solid felicity of an eternal heaven. And what power is able to break these chains? Who can set our hearts at liberty, and turn them from sin to righteousness? Who but the same God that created our hearts at first? He alone can draw the affections from the love of the world, and from the love of sin and self, up to the things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

Upon all these accounts it appears that man is incapable even of going to Christ, and much more of running after him, unless he be drawn. The scripture is express: "No man can come unto Christ, except the Father draw him." Our church is clear in her opinion: "Such is the condition of fallen man, that he cannot turn himself to God unless the grace of Christ go before, to give him a good will, and then work with him when he has that good will." And this is also evident from matter of fact, and from experience. We find that all men, by nature, instead of turning themselves to Christ, who is the fountain of every good, turn to sin, which is the source of every evil. Among learned and polite nations, professing Christianity, there is the same ignorance of the things of God as among the darkest heathens; the same depravity of the will, the same corruption in the heart and the affections; which are clear and full proofs of our inability ever to go to Christ, unless he draw us to himself. The speaker, in the text, saw these proofs in a strong light. He found his want of a Saviour, and he felt how unable he was to do any thing towards attaining or meriting the Saviour's love: he was quite helpless, and without strength; therefore he begs the grace of Christ would draw him. My brethren, are you in this state? Do you see the reasons which I have now laid before you in a clear and convincing light? If not, may the ever-blessed God, of whom we are speaking, draw you by his grace unto himself: but if you are convinced, then you will gladly follow me to the consideration of the scripture method of drawing the soul to Christ: and this is the second point upon which I was to speak.

It is evident, fallen man wants drawing to Christ, because the scripture has taught us the established method by which he draws us. The several steps of it are there particularly marked out for our instruction, that we might be certain how the work of grace advances in our own souls. The word of God is the out-

ward means of drawing us. The Holy Spirit applying the word is the inward means. He begins his application by awakening the careless secure sinner, and by convincing him deeply and thoroughly of his being a sinful helpless creature. He shows him how entirely he is departed from God, and how unable he is to return; and then he makes him deeply sensible of his misery until he does return. By which means the awakened sinner finds his want of a Saviour; and it is the daily prayer of his heart that he may find pardon and peace through the blood of the Lamb of God; but at the same time he feels so much of his corruption, that he knows these prayers could never have arisen in his heart unless the Holy Spirit had begun to draw him unto Christ. He who could before boast of the light of nature, and of the great stretch of his reasoning faculties, now finds nothing but blindness and darkness in his understanding. He who used to think highly of the dignity of human nature, and of man's rectitude, and of the moral sense, &c. now sees that his will is by nature inclined to evil, and that our dignity and rectitude, and moral sense, are the mere chimeras of metaphysical dreamers. Now he feels himself to be a poor lost sinner, whose heart and affections are so far turned from God, that, unless the Holy Spirit create in him a new heart, he can never return. Being thus convinced of his sinfulness and misery, and of his own helplessness to take one step towards his deliverance, he is prepared for the next work of grace, which is to draw him and to unite him to Christ by faith. If the Holy Spirit had never convinced him of sin, he would never have found any want of a Saviour; and if he had never seen his own helplessness, he would not have seen any necessity for being drawn to Christ by his grace: but being now convinced that he is both a sinner and also a helpless sinner, the desires of his soul are drawn out after God, and he is in a right temper to wait upon God until he be gracious unto him. And it is the office of the Holy Spirit to keep him waiting in the ways of the ordinances, until, in God's due time, he is sent to convince him of righteousness, and to bear witness with his spirit that the Father has accepted him and pardoned him through the merits of his beloved Son. Hereby he receives a well-grounded faith in the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ. He can safely apply the merits of them to himself, and has great joy and peace in believing that they are imputed unto him for righteousness. He has the sure witness of this in himself, even the witness of the Holy Spirit, bearing testimony that Christ is his Saviour, and that God is his reconciled Father. This spirit of adoption enables him to cry, Abba, Father, and to go to God with filial love and confidence. He now loves God, because he knows that God first loved him; and thus he is drawn to God by the cords of a man, by the bands of love, and is ready, through grace, to give outward evidence of the reality of the inward work, by running after Christ in the way of his commandments.

Thus the Holy Spirit is the convincer of sin and the convincer of righteousness; and by these two convictions he draws the sinner, and unites him unto Christ. He shows him that he wants a Saviour, and then he shows him his interest in the Saviour. He first makes him feel that he is a lost sinner in himself, and then that he is saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is the established method in which the Holy Spirit draws the sinner unto the Saviour; and this is a further proof of its being necessary he should be drawn; since the scripture has informed us both of the agent by whom, and also of the method by which, he is drawn unto Christ

My brethren, have you experienced this? Has the Holy Spirit drawn you from the love of sin and self? Have you left the world, and all that is called great and happy in it, to follow Christ? Is no object more desirable than he is in your eyes? Can you take up the cross, and run after him with joy, although reproach, ridicule, and opposition, meet you at every step? Examine your own hearts, and try them by the certain effects which follow upon the Holy Spirit's drawing the soul to Christ; and this is the third particular in the text: "Draw me, and we will run after thee."

The natural man cannot follow Christ, because his heart and his affections are in another interest. He loves to follow the world and its pleasures. And if he was convinced it was right to follow Christ, he would meet with many insuperable

difficulties before he could set out and run after him. But when the Holy Spirit draws him, he then removes that unwillingness which made the way appear so difficult; and when he renews the faculties, he then gives them strength to overcome every difficulty. By his grace the inbred opposition is subdued: the understanding is enlightened, and sees the way clearly; the will follows it readily; the heart and the affections pursue it cheerfully. They follow their Lord and Saviour whithersoever he goeth. They run after him with ease in the way that was before difficult; with pleasure in the way that was before painful; and with continuance in the way wherein before they could not take a step. When the Holy Spirit has drawn the sinner to Christ, and really united him by faith to the head of the mystical body, he is then a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, both in his state and actions. The branch of the wild olive-tree is grafted in, and partakes of the root and fatness of the good olive-tree, whereby its nature is changed. There is a real and an entire change made, which appears evidently to the common observer by the outward change in a man's life and conversation. He acts upon different motives from what he did before. He pursues different ends, and by different means. Before, he ran after the world, now he runs after Christ. Christ is now become all his treasure, and the heart will be where its treasure is; and where the heart is, the other faculties will follow. No opposition shall discourage them. Let them be drawn and united to Christ, and none of his commandments will be grievous. Even self-denial, the hardest commandment, will be easy. Place the love of Christ in the heart, and the man who before shrank from and trembled at reproach is nothing moved at it. He that was afraid of having his name cast out with contempt, now can rejoice in being despised for Christ's sake: he can give up his character: he was once reckoned a learned and a good man: but now he can bear to be called a madman and a fool. He takes up his cross daily, and runs on rejoicing. The contempt of the world hastens his steps. It spurs him on. It drives him nearer to his Saviour, and makes him live in closer communion with him. If worldly men knew what infinite service they do us by their opposition, they would alter their behaviour; for they are our real friends, though they do not intend us any kindness. They make us sit looser and freer from the world than we otherwise should do; and when we are willing sometimes to take a little rest, and our love and zeal begin to abate something of their ardour, then they stir us up, and make us mend our pace homewards. Thus the Holy Spirit causes all things to work together for our good: even outward opposition, sanctified by his grace, helps us forward, and enables us to run the faster after Christ. And I hope there are many of us who can say with the apostle, that nothing shall separate us from our blessed Lord and Saviour. "I am persuaded," says he, "that neither tribulation nor distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

My brethren, if you have been drawn to Christ, have these effects followed? Are you running after him in the ways of his commandments, and running with delight, as after the greatest happiness you can enjoy in time and in eternity? If this be your state, then in you is this scripture fulfilled. May he keep you by his almighty grace, and lead you on safely, until he draw you up to himself, and make you blessed with him for ever and ever. But if this be not your state, then it is incumbent upon me to warn you of your guilt and of your danger, and to call upon you, by every thing that is dear and valuable, to reflect seriously upon the situation you are in. And this brings me to the fourth and last particular upon which I was to speak. While I am applying it as closely as God shall enable me, oh, may he second my application by his grace, and carry it with his effectual working to every one of your consciences!

And first, in the spirit of love, I address myself to those persons whose affections are not drawn out after Christ by the sweet influence of his Spirit. Although Christ has every beauty, every perfection, in himself, and is willing to communicate to us of his fulness, grace for grace, yet, alas! few persons desire him, and fewer run after him. You may easily draw them to a play, to a concert, or to a ball; but to the God of all grace and glory, what arguments, what motives, can draw them? Propose to them a fair opportunity of getting a great fortune;

show them the way to honour and grandeur; their hearts meet the proposal with raptures: but change the discourse, and offer to them the inestimable riches of Jesus Christ, and the eternal honours and grandeur which he has to give; they feel no emotion. What can be the cause of this strange inconsistency? Whence is it that men who love pleasure should nevertheless be so absurd as to prefer sensual to spiritual, and temporal to eternal, pleasures; nay, so monstrously and wickedly absurd as to let the love of the world shut out the love of that God who made it, and who will soon destroy it? What can be the reason of this? But that man is a corrupt, fallen creature, depraved in every faculty of soul and body; insomuch that, in spiritual matters, he is as incapable of acting aright, as a dead man is of acting at all: for he is dead in trespasses and sins. Before he can move or stir a step, he must be awakened and convinced of his own helplessness. Then he will have reason to wait upon God for his help. But if he never finds himself sick, he will never send for the physician. If he be never convinced that he cannot go to Christ unless he be drawn, he will never desire the Holy Spirit to draw him. And if any of you be in this case, awake, thou that sleepest in death! Oh! awake! awake! open thine eyes, and consider thy guilt. Whither can sin draw thee, but to hell? Consider thy danger—how near thou art to it! Thy heart and affections have never been drawn after Christ; but they are still placed upon those objects which draw the love of all natural men unto themselves. Either money or pleasure or ambition are their favourite pursuits, so far as to exclude Jesus Christ, yea, the very hungering or thirsting after him. You have not even a desire to experience his love: and therefore you may be assured that you have no work of grace in you. You are still in your natural state; at an infinite distance from God. You have the guilt of your nature and the guilt of your lives to answer for at his great tribunal. His holy law has already condemned you, and has passed sentence upon you, threatening to pour out all its curses upon your guilty heads. The righteous Judge is bound to see them executed upon you. And you know not how soon he may call you to judgment. Oh! may God rouse up your fears, my brethren, and alarm you at the sight of your danger! Shall you, who fly with eager haste from temporal danger, be easy and careless while the almighty God is your enemy, and he may this moment come and get glory to all his attributes by your everlasting destruction? Can you think yourselves secure in this case while there is only this little light vapour in your nostrils between you and hell? Lord Jesus, forbid it! If any person hear me this day, who came hither without any intention to be made uneasy about the state of his soul, oh let him now feel the misery of being separated from thee, the fountain of good, and draw him to thyself. Dear Lord, now draw his heart from sin and Satan, from the world and the things of it, that he may follow me with profit, and be edified and comforted from what I have to apply,

Secondly, To those persons whose desires the Holy Spirit has begun to draw unto Christ. I hope many of you are brought thus far, and can truly say, "Draw me; and we will run after thee." If you can desire this sincerely, then the Holy Spirit has already begun to set your hearts at liberty. Wait upon him, and he will enable you to follow Christ with delight, whithersoever he calleth you. He will let you see so much of your want of Christ, and of his all-sufficiency to supply your wants, that you will resolve to give up all for him: you will see nothing more worthy of your pursuit than the knowledge of your interest in Jesus. There is indeed nothing else worth your pursuit. Unless you are found in him, God the Father is your enemy, as you are a sinner in yourself; but when he sees you in the Son of his love, a living member of his body, all his blessings are yours, in time and eternity. Oh, then, be earnest, be unwearied at the throne of grace, until you are drawn effectually to Christ, and by faith united to him. Whatever keeps you from him, pray that it may be removed. And be it ever so dear an object—a right hand, or a right eye—look up to him, and he will give grace sufficient for you. If it be sin; he is almighty to save you from it. If it be great sin; his merits and righteousness are infinite. If they be many sins; what proportion do they bear to infinity? Are you a poor lost sinner? Did not he come to seek and to save that which was lost? Are your sins of a deep dye? The greatest have been pardoned. But none, you

think, were ever so great as yours. How can that be? Is it not written, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I, says Paul, am chief. But still the sense of your great unworthiness fills you with doubts and fears. You forget that Christ is the Saviour of the unworthy; and when he gives you Paul's faith, and you can say with him, Jesus Christ loved me, and gave himself for me, then your doubts and fears will fly before it. Whatever keeps you from closing in with Christ is an enemy to your soul. Pray, therefore, against it. Entreat the Holy Spirit to remove it, that you may be drawn to the loving Saviour of sinners and united to him by living faith. And until he produce this grace in you, seek him diligently in all his ordinances. They are the instituted means by which he draws sinners to himself, and more closely unites believers. The word is the ordinance which he chiefly uses to the awakening of sinners. Glory be to him for that attractive virtue and powerful efficacy which still accompanies the preaching of it. By his blessing it is daily effectual to the convincing and converting of careless sinners, and to the building up and establishing of believers. Wait, then, under it, and look up to God for the quickening Spirit to enable you to mix faith with what you hear. Be much in prayer. Pray to have your affections drawn from the world, and fixed upon God. Seek his presence in every ordinance; and when you find him in it, he will give you that grace which he intended it should convey. And thus persevere in the use of the means until he bring you to the end. You shall find him whom your soul seeketh. He will draw you to himself; and then you will be able to run after him to whatever he calls you to do or to suffer. I hope there are several of you in this happy condition: and to you, my Christian brethren, I address myself in the third and last place.

You know the truth of this scripture by your own experience. Having been convinced that you could not come unto Christ except the Father had drawn you by his good Spirit, you waited upon him, until he gave you faith, and united you to Jesus Christ. Being united to the Lord and Giver of grace and glory, all things are become yours. You are now the sons of God; and your heavenly Father will make all things work together for your good. You are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Oh, remember then your privileges, and walk as children and sons of the most high God. Keep near to your reconciled Father, and be ever looking to Jesus, your dear Redeemer, and seek to be drawn nearer to him daily by waiting upon him in his ordinances, that you may have more of his life and love. And let the great things he hath done for your souls be manifested by your outward walking. Show that you have nearness to God the Father through the Son of his love, and access with confidence through the faith that is in him. Let this appear by your living upon Christ's fulness, and receiving from thence grace for grace. And the more grace you receive, in the strength of it run the faster after Christ for more grace. Run in the ways of his commandments. Follow his example. Press close after him in his steps. And, be assured, the closer you follow him upon earth, the nearer will you come to him in heaven. The more you are conformed to him in holiness, the more shall you be like him in glory.

Happy are you, my Christian brethren, who have been thus drawn to Christ, and are thus running after him. Hold on your course, determined in God's strength not to stop upon account of what he shall either call you to do or to suffer. Pursue the way of duty, in which Christ walked, whatever difficulties you may meet with; and fear not but he will give you strength to go on conquering and to conquer. Whatever his will is concerning you, rely upon him, and he will make you more than conquerors. You know where your strength is. God is your refuge and strength. Go to him in every hour of temptation, and he will give you grace sufficient for you. Ask, and you shall have. The Father will give whatever you ask in his Son's name. This is your great privilege; and God grant you may ever make use of it in time of need. Let us now use it to crave a blessing upon what we have heard. And the whole of this discourse is excellently summed up in the collect of our church for this day:—

"Grant to us Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit to think and do always such

things as be rightful, that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Amen.*

DISCOURSE III.

CHAP. i. ver. 4.

The upright love thee.

THE first part of this verse has been already considered. The person who speaks it, perceiving the form and comeliness of Christ, and finding a sweeter savour in his name than in the most fragrant ointment poured forth, was desirous of close union and spiritual fellowship with him: but, being sensible of his own helplessness to come to Christ, had therefore prayed he might be drawn: "Draw me; and we will run after thee." The prayer was heard and answered. Christ drew the soul by the cords of love unto himself, and, as the following words show, he brought it nigh, and gave it free access with confidence, through the faith that is in him. He shed his love abroad in the heart which drew it out in love to him. The believer found himself enriched with so many graces, and enjoyed such sweet communion with Christ, that he rejoiced in him always, and declared that nothing but sin and ignorance could hinder men from seeing and admiring the excellencies of Jesus Christ. If they were not in a fallen corrupt state, they would certainly admire and love him: for the upright love him.

If you were to ask the generality of men, who call themselves Christians, whether they loved Christ; they would answer, What! do you think we do not love our Saviour? Most certainly we do: for who can help loving him? We are taught to pray to him, and to love him from our very infancy, and we always have loved him.

But if you inquire upon what account they love Christ; what knowledge they have of him and of his salvation; and what proof they can give of their love to him; they are then at a loss; they can only tell you that their parents had them baptized, and brought them up in the church of England, and that they keep constant to their church, and have done their duty, as well as they could, they never wronged any body; no one is without faults; and they have theirs. This is the religion of the greatest part of our people: but how far short is this of the scripture character of one that loves Christ! A man may do all this, and much more, without one grain of love. He may practise many duties in his natural fallen state from several other motives than a sense of love to Christ, and a single eye to his glory. These are the Christian motives to obedience, by which no natural man can be influenced. The Holy Spirit must have convinced him of his fallen state, must have raised him from it, must have opened his eyes to see what Jesus has done for his salvation, and must have shed abroad in his heart the love of God, before he can come up to the scripture character of them that love Christ: for they are upright who love him.

That we may have a clear and full view of the doctrine in the text, it will be proper to consider,

First, What is the scripture idea of the word Upright.

Secondly, That man is not upright by nature.

Thirdly, That he must be made upright before he can love Christ.

Fourthly, That being made upright, he will show his love to Christ by walking in love; and in the

Last place, I will draw some practical inferences from the whole. And may the Spirit of grace accompany and bless our meditations upon these particulars. May he direct our hearts into the love of Christ, and render what shall now be spoken upon it the means of increasing it in all our souls. Under his guidance let us consider,

First, What is the scripture idea of uprightness.

The Hebrew word which is here translated, upright, is in the plural number. As a verb, it is rendered, to make straight, Isaiah xl. 3, 4, "to direct in the way," Isaiah xlv. 13, "and to walk straight in it," as 1 Sam. vi. 12, "And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." This is its received sense in the lexicons; and from this idea the noun substantive is used for a directory, whatever guides in the right way; and the plural masculine denotes those persons who are in the right way, and who walk straight in it, whom we properly term upright men; alluding to their having been once in a fallen state and having lost the right way, but, being now raised up, they are brought into it again, and made upright.

"Made upright!" say our moralists, "How absurd is this expression! What necessity is there for making us upright? Are we not so by nature? Have not we all a moral rectitude? Have we not in ourselves the rule of right, and obligations to follow it? We are moral agents, and upright: why, then, do you talk of making men what they already are?"

This is the language of modern reasoners, who would be wise above what is written: "For the soul that is lifted up," saith God, "is not upright in him" Hab. ii. 4. And yet the pride of their hearts loves flattering compliments, be they ever so false; and they are fond of being told of the dignity and rectitude of their nature, although these are mere metaphysical chimeras. They are contrary to matter of fact, and to every day's experience, and contrary to the express word of God, which proves that man is not upright by nature, as I am to show under my second head.

The whole volume of Revelation gives us this character of mankind: "They have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And what can be the dignity of a poor lost sinner who has robbed God of his glory? And where is the rectitude of fallen man, of whom "there is none righteous; no not one?" The scripture strikes at the very root of our fancied dignity and rectitude when it declares, Mic. vii. 2, "there is none upright among men," no, not one is there in the rectitude of nature, in which man was at first created; for "God hath made man upright," saith another scripture; "but they have sought out many inventions," sinful as well as foolish, which prove that they are not upright as they first came out of the hand of God. And indeed the scripture speaks so much of the fall and corruption of nature, as if it left man without any power or strength to recover himself. The prophet Jeremiah, praying to God, says, x. 23, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." To which agree the words of the apostle, Rom. iii. 9, &c.: "We have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the way:" so that there is no uprightness in any of them. Fallen man is gone out of the right way, and he does not understand how to return into it, nay, he does not so much as seek after God, that he may be set right. His desires and his affections are turned from God: they are set upon sin, as our church expresses it, in the ninth article: "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man—whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit." How can man, under the guilt of original sin, have any moral rectitude? Can he be upright who is very far gone from original righteousness? Can he be in the right way, who is very far gone out of it? And how can he be inclined to love Christ, who, by the fault and corruption of his nature, is always inclined to evil? While there is no fear of God before his eye, how can there possibly be any love of God in his heart? The love of Christ is absolutely inconsistent with the blindness and depravity of fallen man, who is in love with sin. Sin and Christ are as opposite as heaven and hell, to which they lead. And as fallen men are inclined to sin, and love it, the flesh lusting always contrary to the spirit; consequently, while they continue in this state, they cannot love Christ; for none but the upright, who are raised from their fallen state, love him.

Men and brethren, examine these authorities. Do they appear to you clear and decisive? Here are the express words of scripture, and the determination of our church upon this very point; declaring that man, in his natural state, is not upright. I would infer, from your presence here, that you do believe this truth; and if you do, may it be a practical belief. Act under the sense of it. As you are convinced that you are not upright by nature, certainly you will seek to be made upright, and will therefore gladly follow me to the third point I was to consider; *viz.* that you must be made upright before you can love Christ.

There is no other method but what the gospel proposes. You would not go to the law, and set about keeping it more carefully for the future, in order to recover your rectitude; because the law allows of no failing. Upon the first offence it puts you under the curse, and condemns you. And as all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, therefore by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight. The law is a ministration of condemnation; it is useful to show sinners that they are not upright; but it can afford them no hope; neither doth it offer them any remedy. It can only scourge and wound the conscience with the sense of transgression, and send the guilty to the gospel for the recovery of their uprightness. And the gospel discovers to them the rich plan of grace—the covenant of the Eternal Three—with the distinct offices of each person in the economy of man's recovery. The Father's justice requires and receives; the Son's love pays, the Holy Spirit's grace applies, the atonement. The application is in the hand of the Spirit Jehovah. It is the work of his grace to apply to fallen man the benefits of the atonement, and to unite him by saving faith to Jesus Christ, whereby he is made upright.

The scripture has laid down, and all the upright have experienced, the method which the Holy Spirit pursues in bringing fallen man into a state of uprightness. First he shows the sinner his guilt and his danger, and lets him see that he is not upright. When the Holy Ghost the Comforter is come, says our Lord, he will convince the world of sin. When he comes to the natural man, he finds him secure and unconcerned about the state of his soul or the pardon of his sins: for the whole world lieth asleep, yea dead, in trespasses and sins, until awakened and quickened by the power of God's Spirit. He that can be heard even by the dead, calls, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." This awakens and alarms the conscience. The sinner is made sensible of his guilt and condemnation, and, convinced of his helplessness, and thus humbled under the sense of his want of uprightness, he is enabled to follow that divine teaching which is to convince him where his wants may be supplied.

He hears the report of the gospel, that all sinners who are sensible of their wants may have them supplied out of the exceeding riches of Christ's grace, who has every thing to give that they can stand in need of. They may receive, out of his fulness, grace for grace. Are they ignorant of the things of God? He is an all-wise prophet to enlighten their understandings. Are they under the pollution and guilt of sin, and under the condemnation of the law? He is an all-meritorious priest, whose blood can cleanse them from the pollution and guilt of sin, and by whose righteousness sinners are freed from the condemnation of the broken law, and stand accepted in the sight of the holy God. Are they enslaved and in bondage to their spiritual enemies? He is an almighty king, who can subdue in them the dominion of sin. When the awakened sinner hears these things out of the gospel, he assents to them as truths, and the Holy Spirit draws his desires out after the experience of them. As he is made to feel his wants, so doth he wish for a supply from Christ's fulness. He pants with fervent desire, and earnest breathings of soul, to know his union with Jesus by faith, and would gladly receive him in all his offices as a king to subdue sin in him, as well as a prophet and a priest to free him from the guilt and deliver him from the punishment of sin. The Holy Spirit cherishes and strengthens these good desires, and in his own good time he completes them; which is the third step in the work of experience.

He convinces the awakened sinner of righteousness by giving him faith to believe that the righteousness of Christ is imputed unto him for justification to

life. The scripture says expressly that it is his office to convince men of righteousness, and thereby to give them peace in believing that God the Father is reconciled unto them through the righteousness of his Son: "for being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 1. And when the mind is at peace with God upon account of its being justified by faith, then it is made upright, and the evidence of justifying faith is an upright walking. He that is in a justified state, is upright; and in consequence thereof he will, in his life and conversation, walk uprightly. As he has received Christ Jesus the Lord, so he walks in him, and desires to live to the glory of his divine Saviour. He would have every thought and word and work a testimony of his gratitude. It is the prayer of his heart that he may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, and may show forth the praises of his God by being fruitful in every good work: for "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and (to the upright who keep them out of love) his commandments are not grievous."

My beloved brethren, consider these things, and weigh them attentively. Have you been made to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin? that it has robbed you of your innocence and uprightness? that you are thereby exposed to the condemnation of the law, and to the wrath of infinite justice? Have you fled for refuge to Jesus? Do you perceive that he is the end of the law for righteousness unto you? And therefore, knowing yourself upright in him, can you say, Christ is precious; he hath made me upright, therefore I love him; it is the grief of my soul to offend him; it is the greatest joy and delight of my heart to live and walk so as to please him? If you are as yet strangers to this happy knowledge, deceive yourselves no longer: do not think you have a sincere love to Christ: for you know not the power of Christ's love to you. But if you have been thoroughly humbled, and convinced of your lost, helpless state, and have received Christ and his righteousness with love, joy, and peace, then, being made upright, it is incumbent upon you to walk uprightly. It is your bounden duty to have a heart full of gratitude to God; and it is your privilege and happiness to be able to express your gratitude in your life and conversation. In them let it appear that you love Christ. Let the world see it in your Christian walking, and give them continual occasion to glorify God on your account. And this brings me to the fourth particular I was to consider; namely, that, being made upright, you will show your love to Christ by walking in love.

When love is in the heart it will appear outwardly. It will have its proper works. It will manifest itself, like light, and spread abroad its sweet influence. Light cannot propagate darkness, nor can the love of Christ produce hatred to his will: it is the doctrine of one apostle to his Colossians, chap. ii. 6: "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him;" and of another apostle: "If any man saith he abideth in Christ, he ought himself also to walk, even as Christ walked." 1 John ii. 6. He is to prove that he abideth in Christ by following Christ's example, and by walking in his steps: for as Christ has made him upright, he will enable him to walk uprightly, because his outward walking is to bring glory to God and good to mankind. The love of Christ in the heart is that practical love which the apostle says is the fulfilling of the law: for it operates in the love of God and in the love of our neighbour, and on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The upright man has a lively sense of God the Father's being reconciled to him in Christ. Without this he could not love God: for a sinner, conscious of his having offended God, and broken his holy law, can never be brought to love God until he be convinced that God loves him. He may as soon love pain and torments as love an offended God, whose almighty justice is to get itself glory by his destruction: but when he is persuaded that God is reconciled to him, then he has with joy and delight received the word of reconciliation; for "we love him," not abstractedly, or metaphysically, but experimentally, "because he first loved us." And when the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, and reveals to them God's first loving us, then we see God in a new light. We look upon him as our reconciled Father, and in this character he appears altogether amiable and lovely. Having tasted how good and gracious

he is, we desire from our hearts to please him; and this desire will certainly operate in the two great commandments—the love of God, and the love of our neighbour.

The upright man loves God and walks with God. Love attracts and unites, and thereby produces communion. The believer has communion with the Father and the Son by the bond of the Spirit; from whence are derived to him all the graces and blessings of the gospel, which he receives with a thankful heart, and shows his gratitude by loving what God loves. We know what God loves, from his revealed will. This is the copy of his mind. And when the same mind is in us that was in Christ, then each of us shall be able to say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." The will of the upright man is reconciled to God's will; and therefore the way of the commandments becomes pleasant. There may be difficulties in it; but his love rejoices to overcome them. His spiritual enemies may tempt him out of the way; but love sets him above their temptations. When the world tries to share his heart with God, he rejects its offers with scorn; for he remembers that, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Does it offer him pleasure? His love has found other kinds of pleasure than the world has to give, even pleasures laid up at God's right hand for evermore. Does it offer him money? His affections are placed upon the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is his heart, and there is his treasure. Does it tempt him with honour? He desires only the honour that is of God. And thus, love arms him against the temptations which try to make his will act differently from God's will. His love being sincere, he has upright intentions, has a straight view of things, sees them with a single eye, and therefore is not easily drawn aside. God's glory is his one great end and aim. He has respect to it in every thing he does, and is as careful of avoiding whatever tends to injure it as if it were wounding the apple of his own eye. And thus the upright man shows his love to God agreeably to what is written: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

And his love to God not only enables him to do all things, but also to suffer all things. This is a very hard lesson to flesh and blood; but love makes it easy. Every disciple of Christ is called to follow him in the way of suffering. The cross is our portion. Self, indeed, would be gladly excused in the taking it up; but love to Christ enables us to deny self, and to take up the cross daily: "For love endureth all things." 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Love can endure the sharpest cross; and Christians have rejoiced and been exceeding glad in bearing it. They have had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned; they were sawn asunder; were tempted; were slain with the sword. They wandered about in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, destitute, afflicted, tormented; and yet they were happy under all their sufferings. Many waters could not quench their love, nor could the floods drown it: for they loved not their lives unto the death. In the very flames they triumphed in their love to Christ; and in whatever shape death came, they rejoiced in it, because it would bring them to their beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And, thank God! we have still some men of the same spirit, who know in whom they have believed. Christ is dearer to them than life; and if he should call them to give proof of it, his strength would be perfected in them, and he would enable them to say with the apostle, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us: for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And after the upright man has thus learned to do and to suffer all things out of love to Christ, he will certainly keep the second great commandment, which is like unto the first, and love his neighbour as himself. There is no brotherly love in the natural man. He may talk and write about it, but he cannot practise it sincerely and disinterestedly; because his views are narrow and selfish

St. Paul's character of the Romans, chap. i., is true of all natural men; they had every temper that was hateful, and they were haters of God; and hating one another. But how, then, is brotherly love to be attained? It is from above, from whence cometh every good and perfect gift. The apostle Paul says, We must be taught it of God, 1 Thess. iv. 9: and another apostle says, "Let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." From these scriptures it is evident that God teaches us brotherly love; and when we are born of God, are made his adopted children in Christ, and know him to be our loving Father, then have we that faith which worketh by love to God and to man. This working love prays for, and labours to serve, both their souls and bodies. It goes about doing them good, seeking opportunities and willingly neglecting none. This is the upright man's walking with respect to his neighbour. He is knit to him in love, and shows it by the labour of love, by doing every kind and good office that is in his power. And thus he walks in love; as Christ hath loved him; which is the highest degree of brotherly love: for it is our Lord's new and great commandment, that we should "love one another as he hath loved us."

Judge, now, whether there be not good reason for the assertion in the text—"The upright love thee?" Can sinners be sensible of Jesus's having done such great things for them? Can they experience such a happy work wrought in them by the Divine Spirit and not love God? It is impossible. They have been made thoroughly sensible of their being by nature estranged from God, and wanderers from the right way, and of their having no power in themselves to return into it again. They found that they had no uprightness in them; for they loved what God hated; yea, they hated God himself, because he is the just avenger of sin. But upon hearing the report of the gospel, that Christ will receive all sinners who come unto him, they were stirred up to come. And they waited upon Christ until the Holy Spirit brought them good tidings of great joy. He shed abroad the love of God in their hearts, bearing testimony with their spirits that God was their reconciled Father, and they were his adopted children in Christ. And being thus made upright before God, in the strength of the Lord they walk uprightly. In their lives and conversations they make the two commandments, upon which hang all the law and the prophets, the rule of their actions; loving the Lord their God with all their hearts, and with all their souls, and with all their strength, and their neighbour as themselves. And thus they give evidence of their love to Christ. This is the doctrine from which, in the fifth and last place, I am to draw some practical inferences.

And is what you have now heard agreeable, my brethren, to your experience? If it be, you are safe and happy. If it be not, I beseech you suffer the word of exhortation. It is an awful and a solemn word: and may God accompany it with the effectual working of his power! If you were upright, you would love Christ: but as you do not love him, hear and tremble, if you have any love left for your poor souls: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Consider what it is to be under an anathema! to be cursed of God, cursed by his holy law, and to be finally excommunicated by that sentence which is never to be reversed, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" If you make light of this at present, yet, unless you repent, a time will come when you will wish you had never been born rather than have died under the anathema of God. Oh may he now touch the hearts of those ungrateful men who love not the Lord Jesus Christ! and may he, of his grace and bounty, give them to taste of that love which passeth knowledge. May he that heareth prayer hear and answer, while I am speaking a word to the formalist who has something of the show, but no more of the power of divine love than the careless sinner.

The formalist is rather decent in his outward behaviour: he attends regularly upon the ordinances, goes a great way in outward matters, and has the air and appearance of a Christian. If you ask him whether he loves Christ; he is very confident he does, and is somewhat offended that you should suspect his love. But bring it to the test of scripture, and it will not stand the trial; for

the formalist not only has not that true love of God, of which the scripture treats, but he is also an enemy to it. He is the first to cry out enthusiasm, if he hear that the love of God arises from the knowledge of our being reconciled to him in Christ. It is with him the very mark of this new religious madness for any man to say that he loves God from a sense of his having freely forgiven him all trespasses. So that the formalist, with all his outward decency and profession, is rather farther from the true love of God than the careless sinner: for the one has it not; but the other thinks it enthusiasm and madness to pretend to have it. And yet the scripture is full of this enthusiasm. It has thus assigned the grounds and reasons of our love to God: "We love him because he first loved us." Here we are taught that our love to him arises from his first loving us: but how can we know he first loves us unless he manifest it and shed it abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost? And in this way he does manifest it. He sends his good Spirit into our hearts to let us know that he first loves us. Hear, ye formalists, the express testimony of God's word; "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Rom. v. 5. And until the Holy Ghost give you this love, be ye ever so decent, in your outward walking, you have none of the life and power of religion, but are dead in your sins. This is the opinion of our church concerning you: for thus she teaches you to pray: O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity (or love) are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity (or love), the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee, &c. (Collect for Quinquagesima.) Charity signifies nothing more than love. And in this collect the sense, as well as the epistle to which it refers, determine it to be the love of God: and if you have not this love poured into your heart by the Holy Ghost, let whatsoever else be in your heart, you are counted dead before God. Oh that he may bring you out of that dead, lifeless state, in which you are at present, and raise you up to newness of life, and place you among the upright who love Christ. And

Whatever others may do, the upright will love Christ. Though other men may see no form nor comeliness in him, that they should desire him, yet, in their eyes, he is altogether lovely. They love him for making them upright; and they give evidence of their love by walking uprightly. His will is theirs. They love what he loves. His revealed will is the copy of his mind, and therefore it is the rule of their conversations. Being made upright, and the same mind being in them that was in Christ, there will be the same outward walking. They will follow his example, and tread in his steps: for how can their love to Christ act against its own nature, so as to hate this will? Certainly, therefore, their love to him will show itself in love to his commandments. And if a man say, I love Christ, and hateth his commandments, he is a liar; for he that loveth not the will of God, how can he love God? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God loveth his commandments also.

Is this your experience, my brethren? inquire strictly, and entreat the Holy Spirit to help you in inquiry, whether Christ has made you upright, and you therefore love him and his commandments. I have put you upon this inquiry, because the scripture puts you upon it, and because there is a general mistake concerning it. The scripture has expressly mentioned the effects which will flow from the love of Christ in the heart: these effects we desire you to manifest in your lives. We do not send convinced sinners to the law, and tell them, If ye would enter into life, keep the commandments. No. We send them to Christ, because they have broken the commandments, and they must be pardoned, and receive justification to life from him, before they can keep any one commandment well-pleasing to God. But when the Holy Spirit gives them the knowledge of their pardon and justification, then they receive a faith that worketh by love—a faith that proves itself to be from God by working in love to what God loves. These workings of faith by love to God and man are the marks and evidences we desire to see in your lives and conversations. We are authorised from God's word to call upon you for them; not as if they were your salvation, but as the certain effects of your being in a state of salvation. The sun canno*

be without sending out light: so love cannot be without producing its proper works—works as certainly flowing from it as light does from the sun. If works flow not out, we are certain there is no love in the heart; for there is no cause, if there be no effects. Examine, then, I beseech you, the nature of the love which you think you have to Christ: see if it has the scripture marks of true love. Happy is he who looking into his own breast, is able to say, "Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee." My brethren, can you take up these words and repeat them with praise and thankfulness? If you can, may you go on rejoicing, daily receiving larger measures of divine love, and bringing forth richer and riper fruits to the glory of God. But if you cannot, do you see your want of love to Christ? and are you hungering and thirsting after it? If you are, look up, and ask it of the God of love. Pray him to bestow it upon you out of the riches of his free grace. And let us all, with one heart and one voice, entreat him, in the words of our church, to give us the experience of what has been now said, praying as she hath taught us—"O almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant unto thy people that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true oys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Amen.*

DISCOURSE IV.

CHAP. i. ver. 7.

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon.

THESE words are part of a prayer which the faithful offer up to the great and good shepherd. He had drawn them to himself, had pardoned all their wanderings, and had shed his love abroad in their hearts; which made them pray for his support and defence. They still found that they had many wants, for which they expected a supply out of his fulness, and many infirmities, from which they desired deliverance in his strength. His grace was needful every moment. That spiritual and divine life which he had begun in their souls could not be carried on without his continual help. They wanted the bread that cometh down from heaven, and which is the life of the spirits of men, as much as they want the bread which is the life of the body. And in time of trouble they wanted divine strength. When assaulted with powerful temptations from within and from without, they durst not think of attacking them, and much less of overcoming them with the arm of flesh; but they sought to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. This is the subject of the words now read; in which the faithful pray the great and good shepherd to tell them where he feeds his flock, and where he shelters them from the scorching heat of the sun at noon: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." Here we have

First, The amiableness of Christ's pastoral office: every faithful soul can say to the good shepherd, "O thou whom my soul loveth."

Secondly, The reason assigned for loving him: he feedeth his flock like a shepherd. And

Thirdly, He gives them comfort and strength in the time of great trials: he makes his flock to rest in the burning heat at noon. And

Fourthly, He saves his flock from the great trial of all—from death.

And while I am speaking to these particulars, may the Spirit of the living God apply them to all your hearts. May he convince you practically of the amiable-

ness of Christ's pastoral office, that you may be able to say from your own experience, " O thou whom my soul loveth." Christ is the good shepherd; and in this character he is altogether lovely. It is one of the sweetest relations that he stands in to his people; and is to them the fullest of comfort: but then they must derive their comfort from knowing him to be their shepherd, and themselves to be his people and the sheep of his pasture. Without this knowledge, speaking of his loveliness would be like talking in an unknown tongue: for what excellency can sinners see in him, that they should desire him, if they were never convinced that they were lost sheep, who must for ever perish, unless the good shepherd bring them back again into his fold? They see no form or comeliness in him until they begin to find their want of him; and therefore, when grace comes, its first work is to convince them of their wants. The first step it sets them in their way to God is, to make them sensible of their having wandered from him. And all of you, my brethren, whatever your state may be at present, had wandered from God. You had gone every man after the error of his own ways; and in the maze of these errors you had wandered so long, that you were quite lost. You could not discover the way back again to God; or, if any one was to show it you, you had neither will nor power to take one step in it. Sin had impaired, yea had deadened, the faculties of the soul. It left the understanding in darkness, the will corrupt and always inclined to evil, and the heart and affections at enmity with God. In this lost and helpless state (and this is the state of every man by nature) you were like sheep that have wandered from the fold. This is a common image in scripture. Fallen man is there compared to a lost sheep; and this is a just and beautiful picture of him; for sheep, as you all know, are simple weak creatures, who have neither force to resist their enemies, nor wisdom to avoid them: they want sagacity to find out the best pastures, to defend themselves from the inclemency of the weather, and to find the way back again to the fold after they have once strayed from it. There is not a creature in the world more helpless than a lost sheep. It must perish unless the shepherd seek it out and bring it back. Now, all the sons of Adam are in this lost and helpless condition: and the first step towards their deliverance is a conviction of their not being able to do any thing towards delivering themselves. Whether they be learned or unlearned, rich or poor, they are alike wanderers from God, and alike unable in their own strength to return. It is exceeding difficult to convince natural men of this truth; and yet the gospel can do them no good until they be convinced. They must see that they are poor lost sheep before they will seek after the salvation which the great shepherd has purchased for them: and because it was necessary they should see themselves in this state, God has therefore been pleased to give them abundant proof of their being in it. The prophet David says, Psalm cxix. 176, " I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant." But lest this should be thought his own particular case, God, by the mouth of another prophet, declares that it is the case of us all: " All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." Isaiah liii. 6. Here all men, without exception, are said to have gone astray like sheep, and to have turned from the way of God to their own ways; and naturally they are like lost sheep, helpless and unable to return. The people of the Jews were certainly in this condition: for our Lord says, he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and not to them only, as if they alone were lost: for " other sheep," says he, " I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring" back again to God from their wanderings: therefore they were lost sheep as well as the Jews, " and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

If the sense of these scriptures were not clear, and their authority decisive, I might bring more proofs; but I hope these are sufficient. They must be satisfactory to the members of our church, because this is her established doctrine, both in her articles and homilies. The homilies on the misery of man are written entirely upon this subject; and the tenth article says, that such is the condition of man after the fall, that he cannot turn or prepare himself to any good unless the grace of Christ go before, to give him a good will, and then work with him when he has that good will. If you never found yourself unable to do any good unless Christ should give you both the will and the power, you may call your-

self a member of our church; but you are indeed a stranger to her constitution. And though you attend upon her ordinances, and take her words in your mouth, yet you deny them in your heart. What a mockery is it of God, for a man to come to church and upon his bended knees, in the presence of an all-seeing God, to declare (which you have all done this day), "Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep," and afterwards to confess "There is no health in us." Is not this mocking God to his face if a man does not believe or does not experience what he says? Let every person who would be thought a member of our church weigh the force of these words, and, if he cannot subscribe to his being a wanderer from God, and as unable to return as a lost sheep, never more let him join with us in our church's confession until he can say from his heart, that he has erred and strayed from God's ways like a lost sheep, and has no health in himself, or strength to return.

It is, then, a plain matter of fact, that fallen man is in a lost helpless condition. He is in it; but the worst part of his fall consists in his being insensible of his danger. He is lost; but he does not know it. He is helpless; but his pride gives him high ideas of his own strength. While he continues in this sinful security, he sees no want of a shepherd; and though he never sends up one wish or prayer for help, yet the great and good shepherd does not forget his own. He is Jehovah, the true self-existing God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible; and this almighty and eternal Being vouchsafes to reveal himself to his people under the sweet and amiable character of a shepherd. Whatever is lovely in an earthly shepherd is to be found spiritually in our incarnate God. Is it expected of a shepherd, that if he lose any of his flock, he should seek diligently until he find it? Is he to spare no pains, to refuse no difficulty or danger, in search of it? Herein we have a beautiful image of our Lord's pastoral love. He looked down from heaven upon the children of men, and saw them wandering every one after the error of their own ways: he saw that destruction and misery were in their ways: he saw the enemy of their souls, like a roaring lion, going about and seeking whom he might devour. His eye pitied them. At the sight of their lost and helpless condition, the bowels of his tenderest compassion were moved. He could not see them perish: and therefore he came down from his eternal throne, veiled the brightness of divine glory under a tabernacle of flesh, humbled himself to the lowest abasement, to be born a servant under the law, to suffer, to die, yea the accursed death of the cross. To this infinite condescension he stooped in order to save his lost sheep. This he expressly declares was the gracious purpose for which he came into the world: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Even they whom he has sought and saved were lost as well as others, and as helpless as lost sheep. They had no desire, and much less power, to return to God; but were pleasing themselves with the errors of their own ways when the Lord Jesus stopped them. He called to them, and gave them ears to hear: he spake, and gave them hearts to obey. He drew them to himself, and saved them with a great salvation. And thus he was found of them that sought him not. And whoever thou art, whom he has sought, thou hast been made to see thy wanderings. If thou art indeed brought home to God, thou hast been deeply humbled for thy turning away from him; and thou art convinced that, if Jesus Christ had not come down from heaven to seek thee, thou must have been lost for ever and ever. But now being sought out by his tender care, and found, thou canst tell of the love of this good shepherd, who has not only brought thee home to God, but has also pardoned thee, washed thee clean in his own blood, and justified thee with his infinite righteousness. Thou art now admitted into his fold; and the sense of what he has already done for thee will enable thee to go to him continually with faith, and say, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest. From what I have already experienced of thy love, I doubt not but thou wilt feed me with the bread that endureth unto everlasting life." And this leads me, secondly, to consider a reason here assigned for loving him, namely, that he feedeth his flock like a shepherd.

The earthly shepherd is not only to bring back the lost sheep; but it is also a part of his pastoral office to provide for its future support. He is to see that it

lack nothing, but is to feed it in green pastures, and to lead it beside the still waters. And herein we have a lively picture of our Lord's pastoral love. When mankind left God, and turned into the ways of sin, they lost that divine support which is the happiness of the soul, and they were separated from the fountain of life. The apostle says, They were alienated from the life of God. And they had no means to recover it, nor indeed any sense of their want of it. They were lying dead in trespasses and sins when the Lord Jesus brought it down for us from heaven, and they are still in this dead state when he sends his good Spirit, first to convince them how much they want it, and then freely to bestow it upon them: "For the bread of God (that bread which supports the life of God in the soul) is he, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." This is our Lord's account of himself. He came down from heaven to give this bread of God unto a world dead in sin; and whenever a sinner receives it of him, then he begins to live unto God. This bread is the support received from Christ's body and blood, from the merits of his obedience and sufferings, which are applied to the sinner by the Holy Spirit, and made effectual by the reviving streams of his grace. And this method of feeding his flock is beautifully painted in the 23rd Psalm; the truth of which every believer experiences as well as David, and can therefore truly say, "The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in green pastures, and shall lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul, and lead me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." The sheep of the Lord's pasture lack nothing: for he supports them with all things that pertain to life and godliness; and when they find themselves thus supported, they will be full of love to their good shepherd, and they will love the means which he has appointed to convey nourishment to his flock. In these means they have grown in grace, their love has increased, and their hearts have been more inflamed with pure affection to their divine shepherd; and therefore they can always join with the believers in the text, in desiring to be led by his grace to the places and means in which he feeds his flock: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy people and the sheep of thy pasture."

My brethren, can you join with them? Is the good shepherd altogether lovely in your eyes for giving you the bread of God which cometh down from heaven? Have you received it from him? Do you find it strengthening your hearts, enabling you to die more to sin and to live more to God, to get power over inward corruption and outward opposition. Happy are ye if this be your case; for you need not fear his comfort and strength in time of great trials and troubles, as it follows in the third part of my text, he will make his flock to rest in the burning heat at noon.

The heat of the sun at noon is, in Judea, very violent and scorching. The faithful shepherd will take care to drive his flock during these sultry hours to some cool shade. There he will defend them from their enemies; for they are weak and defenceless themselves. All the beasts of prey can with ease devour them; and in hot countries, where the beasts of prey abound, the shepherd is forced to watch his flock in the cold of the night as well as in the heat of the day: for thus we find Jacob describing his care of Laban's flock: "I was in the day consumed with heat, and with frost in the night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes." And in the New Testament we read that in the depth of winter, when our Lord was born, there were shepherds in the open field watching over their flocks by night. How beautifully is our Lord's pastoral care hereby represented! For the shepherd of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps, watching over his flock continually night and day, and he suffers no enemy to come near to hurt them. He himself is a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and a safe refuge from the power of all their enemies. They have a formidable host to contend with. Sin, and Satan, and the world, and the temptations and troubles in it, have taken captive the lost sheep, and law and justice allowed them to be kept in bondage until death should seize upon them and deliver them over to the place of torments, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. From these enemies the Lord Jesus came to save his flock. He subdued all these enemies in his own person, and does subdue them by the grace of his almighty Spirit in

all his people. When he has sought them, and brought them back to God, and fed them with the bread of life, then, in the strength of this bread he enables them to fight against their enemies, who are also his; and it is for his glory that they get the victory over them. The weaker they are, the more does his strength appear, which worketh mightily in them and by them. And to encourage them to fear nothing but sin, he thus exhorts them: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" and as it is his good pleasure to give you the kingdom itself, he will certainly support you in the way to it. You may be poor and weak sheep; but your shepherd is the Lord God omnipotent. You may have many infirmities; but he knows them, and is touched with the feeling of them. You may have many temptations; but he will not suffer you to be tempted above what he will enable you to bear. Your troubles may be great; but he says, "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will be with thee in trouble; yea, I will deliver thee, and bring thee to honour." Who can doubt of his pastoral love that reads this sweet description of it in Isaiah? "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." In what a tender and affecting manner is our Lord's pastoral love here represented! He feeds all his flock, so that they lack nothing. If any of them wander from the fold, he gathers them with his arm. Those that are with young, he leads gently: and those that cannot go at all, he carries in his bosom, and lays near his heart. Oh what a wonderful love is this! Certainly there never was greater love, except what our Lord showed when he laid down his life for the sheep: in which instance of his love he is unrivalled. Other shepherds may have such care for their flock as to seek the lost sheep, to feed them all, to watch over them, and to defend them from their enemies: and nothing farther is expected of them. But our Lord showed his greatest love where theirs end. They feed and fatten the flock, that they may feed and clothe themselves with it. They live upon the flock; but he laid down his life for the helpless lost sheep. He died to give them life; for the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep: which leads me to the fourth particular I was to consider; namely, That Christ saves his flock from the great trial of all—from death.

The faithful in the text certainly included this when they prayed for a resting-place from trials and troubles. The raging heat at noon properly expresses the sharpest trial with the last enemy, when sin and Satan try their utmost efforts, and set the king of terrors to attack and alarm the conscience. And they succeed with all natural men. To unpardoned sinners, how fearful is death! The approach of it is to them the beginning of endless sorrows. But our Lord's pastoral love has engaged to deliver the sheep of his pasture from the power and from the fear of death. And here his divine affection for them shines forth in a wonderful manner, which can no more be described than it can be imitated: for if all the holy angels in heaven, and all the creatures in the universe, were to lay down their lives to save one lost sheep, it would be in vain. The Lord Jesus alone was equal to this great work: for he was God and man united in one Christ, and therefore his death was of inestimable and infinite value. By it he made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for sin. St. Paul tells the Corinthians, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." The scriptures of the Old Testament showed, in the sacrifices of the law, that he was to die and to shed his blood for sin. One prophet says that Christ should swallow up death in victory, Isaiah xxv. 8. And in another, Christ himself says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction," Hosea xiii. 14. And the New Testament shows how he fulfilled these scriptures. By the one sacrifice of himself he abolished death; so that it has no longer any power over the children of God.

But do not the children of God die as well as other men? Yes. It is appointed unto all men once to die; but death has no power to hurt God's children; and they know, by faith, that it has not. Here is their comfort. Each of

them can say, with Paul, Jesus Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. By his death I live. I know him and the power of his resurrection: for I have experienced this power raising me up from the grave of sin to newness of life, and therefore, when I go through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou, my almighty shepherd, shalt be there with me; and thy rod and thy staff shall then comfort me.

And thus Christ has delivered the sheep of his pasture from the power of death; and thanks be to God who gives us the victory over the fear of it through Jesus Christ our Lord. He came to deliver those who through fear of death had been all their lifetime subject to bondage. And he does deliver them. We see many happy instances of his power to deliver. And if there be any of you, my brethren, whose hearts tell you that you are not delivered, consider what is the reason. Why do you, who call yourselves Christians, fear to die? What is there terrible in death to a true believer? And yet it is terrible to you. If it should come this day, it would surprise you. Nay the very thought of it is painful. You put it aside, and wish to forget it. All this proves that you have nothing more of Christianity than the name. You have experienced none of the life and power of it: for your sins are not pardoned. You fear death, because the sense of guilt is not taken out of the conscience: "For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." While sin stings the conscience, and the broken law gives strength to sin, so that it stings the deeper, you must fear death. And this is the reason so many people, called Christians, are afraid to die. They do not know that their sins are pardoned, and that all the demands of the law upon them are satisfied, by their good shepherd's laying down his life for them. Nay, they are so far from knowing this, that they never desired, and perhaps many of them think it presumption and madness to pretend to know it. My brethren, if these be your thoughts, you may be assured you can never meet death with joy until faith give you a clear view of your interest in Christ: but when it enables you to see him, obeying, suffering, and dying for your sins, and as your all-prevailing intercessor pleading your cause before God, then the sting of death will be taken away: you will have nothing to fear: for then you will know that all things are yours, whether life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

If we sum up, and lay together what has been said, it will appear that Christ is altogether lovely in the character of the shepherd and bishop of our souls. What more could be done than he has done for the sheep of his pasture? He has brought them back to God from the error of their ways, has supported them when they were brought back, has defended them in their trials and troubles, and has given to them eternal life as the purchase of his death. These, with all the other benefits of the gospel, were obtained by the good shepherd's laying down his life for the sheep, and are now freely bestowed by his grace, and thankfully received by faith. At present it is the great privilege of all Christ's sheep to know by faith that they belong to his fold, and that they have an interest in the blessings which he has to give. These faith receives and enjoys: for we are in possession of none of them until they be applied; and it is faith that makes the application. When we receive faith from the operation of God, then we know that all the benefits which the good shepherd has to bestow are ours: for the language of faith is this: "The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and shall lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." When faith fears no evil, no not even death, then hope can rest itself upon the care of the good shepherd, and the sense of his love will produce love and grateful obedience. Thus the graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love, are produced in the hearts of all that belong to Christ's flock, and are the sheep of his pasture. They know their good shepherd, and are known of him. They know his voice, and follow him, yea, they follow him with joy, whether he calls them to do or to suffer for his name's sake.

If any of you think this is not to be clearly known, your denial does not prove that God has not promised to give this faith, nor that he does not give it, but only that he has not given it to you: for the scripture has expressly promised it;

and it is a certain matter of fact, that God is daily fulfilling his promises. And when they are fulfilled to any person, he cannot but know it. He had been all his life a lost sheep, wandering from God without any desire to return. Does not he know, when he began to pray earnestly, that God would heal his wanderings, and bring him home again? How can he possibly be ignorant of so great a change in his own mind? When his desires take a new turn, he that sought for happiness in the world, now seeks it in Christ, and has turned his back upon all that worldly men call rich and honourable, desiring only the riches of grace and the honours of eternity. How can the man himself not know this, when every body about him sees it? When God has given him these desires, and he is resolved by the help of divine grace to seek until he find by faith that Christ is his Saviour and his God; when his constant discourse is, "Nothing but Christ, nothing but Christ;" does not the man know all this time what he is speaking and doing? It is certain he does, because his neighbours know it and ridicule him for it; and when they cannot laugh him out of his religious notions, they leave him for an incorrigible enthusiast. But if he does not leave seeking God, God will convince him, by many undoubted proofs, that he is one of the sheep of Christ's pasture. God will enable him to know that he is a partaker of all the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel by means of his union with Jesus Christ through faith, and he will send the spirit of adoption into his heart, bearing testimony with his spirit that he is a child of God. This testimony cannot possibly be a delusion, because it is followed by a change which the Almighty alone is able to effect: for, being united to Jesus by faith, he is made partaker of a new nature, with a new heart and renewed affections: he is a new creature: the old things of his former state and conversation are done away, and, behold, all things are become new. His soul is filled with love to his God and Saviour for doing these great things for him, and shows its love by love to his commandments. When all this is done, may not the man confidently say with the prophet, "The Lord is my shepherd: I am one of his people, and one of the sheep of his pasture?"

Since, then, believers may be as certain of Christ's being their shepherd as they were in the text, and can truly say with them, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest them to rest in the raging heat of noon." I have now brought the discourse to the point I aimed at; which was, to prepare the way for this question: and may God enable you to answer it to yourselves honestly and fairly! "Is Christ your shepherd?" Let every one of you ask his own heart, "Is my soul under the pastoral care of this good shepherd?" If you know, by the marks before laid down, that he is yours, and you are the sheep of his pasture, you will love him and serve him, without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of your life. But if you know it not, or are not seeking it, it is incumbent upon me to warn you of your guilt and of your danger. You know not as yet that you have any right to use the words of the text. You cannot say to the great and good shepherd, from a sense of what he has done for you, "O thou whom my soul loveth." You know not that he feeds you with the bread of God, which endureth unto everlasting life, nor that he is your defender in danger, your refuge in time of trouble, your ready helper in an hour of temptation, and your almighty supporter under persecution. Nay, perhaps you may think these things cannot be known. From hence it is certain that you are not at present a part of Christ's flock, and therefore you have none of the blessings or privileges which belong to it—no pardon of sin, no sense of justification to life: you have none of the life which Christ came to give to sinners—no grace, no holiness, no happiness. God the Father is your enemy; his law has condemned you; his justice is concerned to see the sentence of the law executed upon you; and the judge himself has given you an awful description of its execution in the 25th of St. Matthew. Consider these things, my brethren. Weigh the importance of them; and see whether you have not reason to look up to the great and good shepherd, and to entreat him to bring you back to God from the error of your ways. May the Spirit of the living God show you the danger of your present state, and stir up desires in your hearts for deliverance! May he enable you to seek it as his free gift, and in the ways of his

ordinances, until you experience the sweet and comfortable doctrine in the text, and can join in gratitude and praise with the Lord's people, and the sheep of his pasture! to whom I shall, in the last place, make a short application.

My Christian brethren, you have experienced the love of the divine shepherd, and therefore you love him, and can with full trust and confidence address him in the words of the text: "O thou whom my soul loveth." In the sense of this love you are happy. Knowing that the incarnate God stands related to you as your all-loving shepherd, you can cast all your care upon him; for he careth for you. He has engaged, and your faith can rest itself upon his promises, that you shall lack nothing. All things are yours: for they are in the hand of your kind shepherd and loving Saviour, who will make them all work together for your good. He knows what is best for you; and he will give it you. And you know it to be best: be it sickness or health, poverty or riches, they are alike sanctified visitations. You taste of God's love in them, and you love him for them. Nothing can hurt you but sin; and you need fear nothing but it: for all things but sin shall do you good. Outward trials and troubles shall be real blessings. They will drive you nearer to Christ, and keep you in closer communion with him; and thereby you will not only be a conqueror over them, but also make great advances in the divine life. "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" says the apostle, "shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Now, is not this a state greatly to be desired? If something did not blind men's eyes and pervert their judgment, would not they all, out of self-love, seek the happy knowledge of their being the sheep of the Lord's pasture, who lack nothing, and who have all manner of things that are good? The great shepherd and bishop of souls watches over them by his almighty power, suffering nothing to hurt them in their real interest, but ordering all things for their benefit. His very judgments upon the wicked are mercies to them. And since he can thus make outward calamities work for their good, what must his acts of grace and love be? Who can tell how blessed the man is whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; who has joy and peace in believing that he is pardoned and justified; who has the spirit of adoption in his heart, enabling him to cry, Abba! Father! and abiding with him to strengthen, to comfort, and to sanctify him, shedding daily more and more of the love of God abroad in his heart, and making him fit and meet for glory? Must not such a man be blessed indeed? Can you conceive a more happy state on this side of heaven? And do you not then desire it? If you do, oh, come, taste, and see what happiness this great and good shepherd does bestow; pray to him for the experience of his love and power, and let us join in calling upon him, and saying,

O Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, who hast redeemed them by the blood of the everlasting covenant, look down upon this congregation, and be gracious to those who have no desire to know thee to be the shepherd and bishop of their souls. Show them their guilt, convince them of their danger, and enable them, with those who are now seeking, to wait upon thee until thou bring them into thy fold; and there feed them with the bread of God, and support them in all troubles and trials, until death be swallowed up in victory. O blessed and adorable Jesus, give this whole congregation the sweet experience of the doctrine we have been considering; and although we have all been as sheep going astray, yet grant we may all return to the shepherd and bishop of our souls, and be happy with him in time and in eternity. So be it, to the honour and glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah: to whom be equal praise and worship, now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen.*

DISCOURSE V

CHAP. i. ver. 8.

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

THESE words are in answer to the prayer which the believers had offered up in the preceding verse. They had tasted of the love of the great and good shepherd, and knew they belonged to his flock, and therefore they entreated him to feed them with the bread of God—Give us this day our daily bread—and to lead them in time of trouble and temptation to a place of refuge and safety. Each of them could thus pray for himself: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" Why should I be misled by them? If he followed the flocks of these companions, he would be turned aside, and consequently they were not true sincere companions of Christ, but only in name and pretence.

In the words which I have now read we have the success of this prayer. They contain a gracious answer from our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd and bishop of souls. The prayer consisted of two parts; and he makes a reply to each: "If thou know not," says he, "O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock:" there you will find food, "and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents;" there you will find safety. May his good Spirit enlighten all your understandings clearly to see the sense of these words; and may he enable us to experience the power of them, if it be his good pleasure, by means of what shall be spoken,

First, In a short paraphrase upon them, and

Secondly, In the practical use and application I shall make of them.

Our blessed Saviour is the great and good shepherd of souls. His greatness makes his goodness more desirable; for he is almighty to give whatever he sees his people want. Whatever they ask of him, he is able and willing to grant it; for he is a God hearing prayer; his ears are always open to receive; his love is always disposed to answer the prayer of faith. So soon as the faithful, in the text, had sent up their petitions to the great shepherd and bishop of souls, the answer came down. Yea, he himself brought it. He that spake, and all things were made; he that commanded, and they still obey his commandments and hearken unto the voice of his words; he, the God and king of heaven and earth, says, "If thou know not, if thou doest not clearly and fully know, but comest to me for direction and assistance, O thou fairest among women." The soul is here spoken of, as the church often is, under the similitude of a woman, and said to be fair, fair even in the eyes of Christ, the bridegroom of the church. And by what means was she made thus lovely in his sight? In herself she was black and sinful; and there is nothing so filthy and abominable in the sight of the all-pure God as sin. He cannot behold the least iniquity; and mankind is conceived and born in iniquity, and by nature subject to the wrath of God: how, then, can he behold it with approbation? Not until it be cleansed from all sin in the blood of the Lamb. When it is justified by his righteousness, and clothed with his graces, then it will be indeed fair and beautiful, yea, perfect, through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God. When Christ has thus presented the soul to himself, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish, then he speaks to her as perfect in beauty· "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock." The great shepherd has but one flock. Although it consists of a great multitude, which no man could number, yet they have but one spirit in them all—but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. They are of one heart, and of one mind; they walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing. Though part of them be already entered into rest, and others are still in

the world, yet they have sweet fellowship and communion with each other in the unity of the Spirit; and ere long they will be all gathered into one place. There will be but one fold and one shepherd: for, in the dispensation of the fulness of time, God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him.

And as the flock is one, so is the way. There never was but one way in which the Lord's flock walked. In the same good old way they that are gone before and we that are following after them must walk. Many disputes, indeed, have been raised about it by men who are gone out of the way. The philosophers of Greece and Rome sought by the light of nature, but could not find it; and our modern reasoners are seeking it by the same light, and still miss it: but believers are at no loss, because their Lord ended all disputes about it, when he declared, "I am the way." He is the only way; because no sinner can come to the Father but by him. You must walk with him in his way if ever you be reconciled to the Father and see his face with joy. And what is it that brings us into his way? Faith, the one faith, which unites the believer to Christ, and which is justifying faith, because there is no saving faith but this. You may divide faith into many branches, according to its several offices, and may give it several names; but if it be saving faith, it is that which justifies, which, by uniting us to Christ, sets us in the right way, and keeps us in it. And this faith all believers had, under the Old Testament dispensation, as certainly as we have it under the New. They proved that they had the one faith by the actings of their faith, as St. Paul has taught us at large in the 11th chapter to the Hebrews; wherein he sets before us the most celebrated personages in scripture, and shows what great things their faith enabled them to do and to suffer, in order to encourage us to follow the steps of their faith.

Some perhaps may inquire whether the faith that justified and saved them was the same that we have now: the apostle replies, that there is but one faith: and if theirs was not the one faith, how could he propose their faith to us, and exhort us to follow them, looking, as they did, unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith? Our reformers have considered the 11th chapter to the Hebrews in the second part of their homily upon faith, and they sum it up in these words:— "This is the Christian faith, which these holy men had, and we also ought to have. And although they were not named Christian men, yet was it a Christian faith that they had; for they looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, as we now do. This difference is between them and us, that they looked when Christ should come; and we be in the time when he is come: therefore, saith St. Augustine, the time is altered and changed, but not the faith." In effect, they and we be all one; we have the same faith that they had, and they the same that we have, and therefore, in the text, we are directed to follow their faith, and more especially the actings of their faith: "Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock." You may see in what way they walked by the marks and prints of their feet, which they have left behind them. Observe those, and tread in their steps. See what great things, how impossible to flesh and blood, their faith enabled them to perform, and go and do thou likewise. St. Paul has determined that this is the meaning of treading in their steps, in Rom. iv. 12, where he is speaking of Abraham's being the father of all those who tread in the steps of that faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised—He is the father of all those who can tread in the steps of his faith, who follow him in the actings of his faith, and can give such marks of its sincerity as he did.

Try, yourselves then, my brethren, in this point, and examine whether you are following the footsteps of the flock. Can you tread in the steps of Abraham's faith? When God called Abraham to leave his country and his father's house, he obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went. God does call you to leave the world, and the things of it, and to set your affections on things above: and can you, have you, obeyed? Do you live in the world, like Abraham, a stranger, and a pilgrim, knowing that here is not your home, but that you have a better country; namely, a heavenly, provided for you? Can you live upon the promises of God, as Abraham did, when all things make against you, and rely

with full trust and confidence upon the divine faithfulness and truth? Can you give up the dearest object of your heart, be it an only child, if the God of all grace and love should think proper to take it from you? Are you thus strong in faith, giving glory to God? Can you copy after these actings of Abraham's faith? If you cannot follow his steps, consider what is the reason. Do you desire it? If you do, have you not the promise of the same grace which Abraham had, to enable you to walk by faith, and not by sight? Are not all things possible to him that believeth? Why, then, are you behind Abraham? Oh hasten your steps, and get to the head of the flock. Let none be before you. You have the very same help that the father of the faithful had; therefore cast aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset you (it is sin that stops your course), and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

But, perhaps, some person may ask, Where shall I meet with the footsteps of the flock of Christ? Where are there any marks of them to be found? That you might not be at a loss, God has been pleased to leave a lively and exact print of them in the scripture. There you have an impression of all the footsteps which you are to follow; for the word is a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths, to guide our feet into the way of peace, and then to order our steps in it. St. Paul, 1 Cor. x., having drawn the great outlines of the Jewish history, says, "That all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition." And having, Heb. xi., described the actings of the faith of the Old Testament saints, he applies them to us for our example, exhorting us to follow their faith; and he also proposes himself for a pattern to the Corinthians: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ:"—follow my steps so far as I follow Christ's. In this light we are to consider the footsteps of the flock. Christ is at the head, and goes before his flock; they follow him and tread in his steps, and we who come after tread in theirs, following them in the way wherein they followed Christ. And all this is recorded for our use in scripture. We are to take no step unless we see some marks of the flock's having gone before and taken that very step; and when we are united by faith to Christ, and under the guidance of his good Spirit, we shall then see directions left in scripture for every step we are to take. And thus, though it be not in man that walketh to direct his steps, yet the Lord will hold up our goings in his paths, that our footsteps slip not: for the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he maketh his way acceptable to himself.

This is, I think, the sense of the first part of my text; namely, of treading in the footsteps of the flock: the next words have very little difficulty—"and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." These shepherds are the servants of the chief shepherd, whose own the sheep are. The ministers of the Lord who have the care and charge of his flock are, throughout the scriptures, called pastors, or shepherds: and their tents, here mentioned, are not such tents as earthly shepherds pitch when they are watching their flocks, but certain stated fixed dwellings, wherein they officiated as spiritual pastors and shepherds. The original word is not what our translators commonly render tents, but another, which always signifies, to dwell or to inhabit, and which is of the same root with Shechinah, the habitation of the divine glory in the tabernacle and temple. The first time it occurs is in the third of Genesis, where the use and design of the cherubim is mentioned: "And God drove out the man, and he 'placed,' he dwelt in, or inhabited, the cherubim." We read of God's appearing in the most holy place of the tabernacle and temple, over the cherubim; for which reason St. Paul calls them the cherubim of glory. And the whole tabernacle and temple, including the holy as well as the most holy place, with all their sacred vessels and apparatus, are generally called by the same word that is in my text; *viz.* "the dwelling." Indeed, it is commonly translated tabernacle; but it signifies the dwelling-place of the God of Israel; the place where he had put his name to dwell there. And accordingly, when the tabernacle and temple were reared up, the glory of the Lord, that glorious and divine person who was the reality of all their types and ceremonies, came and filled them. And it was upon account of his presence in them that the faithful could say, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine

house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth." These circumstances may lead us to consider the dwellings mentioned in my text as places appropriated to a religious use; dwellings sacred rather than civil; such as the shepherds dwelt in when they were acting in their office as pastors over the flock of Christ. In these dwellings they resided in order to dispense the word and the sacraments, and to administer the ordinances to the Lord's people, and to the sheep of his pasture: for here they were to feed the kids. The original word is used for the young of the sheep as well as of the goats, for which the chief shepherd had a particular love and tenderness. He carries them in his bosom. And they lay near the heart of all the Lord's faithful pastors, who watch with the greatest care over the young and weak part of their flock, using every likely means to preserve and strengthen them, and withal striving much for them with God in prayer. No tender parent can be more concerned for the health of a weak and sickly child than they are for the weak in the faith. Knowing to what temptations they are exposed, and what difficulties they have to encounter, they labour earnestly to keep them near the shepherds' dwellings, in close attendance upon the ordinances; for here they will be safe from danger, and will find food to strengthen their hearts and to enable them to grow in grace.

I hope it now appears, from what has been said, that the Lord's answer is direct and full to his people's prayer. They had desired to learn where he had fed his flock, and where he had made them rest in times of great trials and troubles. He replies, with lips full of grace, If thou art at a loss, O my beloved, whom I have purchased with mine own blood, and made fair and lovely with mine own righteousness, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock; see in what way they have always walked; mark the actings of their faith; imitate them; and you will find, the more you act faith, the stronger it will grow. If temptations are powerful, and troubles many and heavy, and the heat of persecution rages, and faith is ready to shrink back, and to give way, then keep near the shepherds' dwellings. There are the ordinances upon which, in time of danger, young and weak believers should attend closely. The more they wait upon the Lord with the pastors of his flock, the more food they will get for their souls, and the greater safety and strength will they find: for where can the believer hope to grow stronger in grace than under the means of grace? These are the instituted means of making believers strong in the Lord, and, in the power of his might, able to withstand in the evil day; and having done all to stand, resisting unto blood, striving against sin.

This is the doctrine of the text in which there are two rules laid down for the conduct of believers. At all times they are to tread in the footsteps of the flock, and to follow the actings of their faith; and in troublesome times they are to keep near the shepherds' dwellings, that they may receive comfort and strength from the use of the ordinances. These are Christ's own directions to them that are in the faith. As to those persons who have never seen their want of faith, and are not seeking it, they are not concerned in what has been said. They have no lot nor share with us in this matter: for how should they follow the footsteps of the flock who are not yet got into the way in which the flock walks? All men, by nature, have turned aside from the right way; they have erred and strayed from the ways of God like lost sheep, and have neither will nor power to turn into it. While they are in this state, they do not belong to Christ's flock; and therefore, how should they follow the actings of their faith who themselves have no faith? My brethren, are any of you in this state? Do you know nothing of your having received faith from God as his gift, and wrought in your heart by the operation of his Spirit? Then you should fear and tremble for your guilt and your danger. Consider your guilt. You have all your sins, original and actual, to answer for, and before a God who is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity. Consider your danger. Have you not read, "He that believeth not, shall be damned?" and are you not afraid of damnation? for while your sins are unpardoned, every step you take tends to hell beneath. And what is there between you and it? Think how near you are to it. There is nothing but this thin partition of flesh, and this little vapour of life, this light air that you breathe; nothing else keeps you out of everlasting burnings. And if God was to take away your breath this

moment, oh! where would your poor soul be? Meditate on an eternity of torments, and, while there is a moment left, use it, and flee from the wrath to come. Flee to Jesus, the great and good shepherd, and try whether he will not save thee: for there is salvation in none other. If thou art sensible of thy guilt and of thy danger, fear not. Apply to him, and he will get himself glory in bringing thee home to God, and in making thee one of the sheep of his pasture.

Although the directions in the text relate only to the faithful, yet I could not help speaking a word to those who neither have, nor are seeking the true saving faith. I pray God to make it useful to their souls! And I now come to apply the first rule here laid down. It is an answer to the prayer of the faithful. They had entreated Christ to inform them where he fed his flock. His answer is, Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock; see in what way they were led and supported, and what prints and marks they left behind them: these follow, and you will be carried safe through, as they were. Christ himself is the way: faith sets believers in it by uniting them to Christ: the footsteps are the actings of faith recorded in scripture—the great things which, by faith, the saints of old were enabled to perform—and these things the scripture holds out to us for our example and admonition. Now, my brethren, when you read of the power of faith in former times, do you find it as powerful in you? Faith is the same: for there is but one faith, and one Lord who gives it: he changeth not: he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His promises are, like himself, truth itself, and unchangeable. Why, then, is not faith as mighty in operation as it ever was? Why does it not perform the same wonders now which it did formerly? In the 11th of the Hebrews, we read of many signal victories, which the old saints obtained by the power of faith; and our church says (second part of the homily upon faith), "St. Paul so much extolleth their faith, because we should not less, but rather more, give ourselves wholly unto Christ, both in profession and living, now when Christ is come, than the old fathers did before his coming. And by all the declarations of St. Paul it is evident that the true, lively, and Christian faith is no dead, vain, or unfruitful thing, but a thing of perfect virtue, of wonderful operation or working and strength, bringing forth all good motions and good works." When you read of the actings of faith in former times, try yourselves, my beloved brethren, and see whether it has the same wonderful operation and working in you. Try whether you can follow the footsteps of the flock. The victories of their faith are marked out for your example. Can you, then, with them, triumph over all the enemies of faith—over sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, death and the grave? These are the enemies with whom you are to fight the good fight of faith; and these the faithful have defeated. Their faith conquered sin by apprehending and applying Christ's righteousness for pardon and justification, and by drawing from his fulness grace for grace, to subdue the dominion of sin. And are you growing in grace, and so strong in faith, that, when sin puts on its most alluring dress, you can, with Joseph and Moses, nobly reject its flattering pleasures? When the devil throws his fiery darts at you, have you the shield of faith ready to hold up in your defence, against which the rage and force of his darts is quenched and spent, so that you can say with Paul, I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith? When the world invites you with its riches and honours, can you, with Abraham and his descendants, live a wanderer and a sojourner upon earth, knowing that God is your God, and that he hath provided for you a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? This is living by faith, and not by sight; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Do you know that the will of the flesh is enmity to the will of God, and therefore, can your faith submit to suffer the will of God, and, with Job, bear it patiently? In short, can you, with Paul, rejoice alike in poverty and riches, in pleasure and pain, in honour and disgrace? yea, can you with him do all things through Christ that strengtheneth you? That is a great word—all things!—I can do all things! And yet faith can speak it without presumption: for all things are possible to him that believeth. It is possible, with David, to fear no evil, no, not when you are going through the valley and shadow of death · yea,

faith can, with the blessed Paul, give thanks to God for giving it the victory over death through Jesus Christ our Lord.

These are some of the victories of faith, which it has already attained, and which are recorded in scripture for your imitation. And if you find any of them too hard for you, it is not because faith has lost any of its virtue and efficacy, but because you do not put faith upon acting. Faith is still almighty. Set it to work, and try its power, and you will find it can do whatever it has done. And why should you doubt of its doing what God has promised it shall do? Surely the Lord's hand is not shortened. He can still make faith as victorious as it ever was: for he left these great exploits of faith upon record for your use. These footsteps of the flock were left on purpose for your encouragement, that you might see how possible it was to conquer sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, death and the grave. These are your Lord's enemies, as well as yours. It is for his honour that you should conquer them. And he promises you his help, the same help which he gave to these faithful soldiers, who, having fought the good fight of faith, now stand confirmed in bliss, with crowns of eternal glory upon their heads, and palms of victory in their hands. Is it not a privilege to be enabled to tread in their steps? Can there be a greater privilege? Can there be greater happiness than to conquer and to be crowned with them? Oh disparage not, then, your Lord, nor his gifts, by doubting of the power of faith. Fear not: only believe. Bring your belief into act. Oppose it to your enemies, and see whether it will not make you more than conquerors over them. Whatever God has promised faith should do in you, and for you, is he not almighty to perform? Doubt not, then, whenever you are following the footsteps of the flock, but his omnipotence will be present with you to fulfil his promises, and you will find that all things are possible to him that believeth.

These victories indeed may be attained by them that are strong in faith: but perhaps some of you may fancy, I am weak in the faith—I must not aspire to such great things. Why not? Faith is the gift of God: and it is mighty by his operation. Faith does not work in the strength of nature, but in the omnipotence of grace. And grace is free—as free for you who are a weak believer as for the strongest! so that you may aspire to great things. Put your faith upon acting, and see whether it will not make you equal to the greatest things: for,

Allowing you are weak at present, yet it is not God's intention that you should continue so. He has appointed the means of grace for your growth in grace. Attend upon the ordinances; keep near the shepherds' dwellings; and there you will find yourselves strengthened and established: for there is food for your soul. God has promised that his quickening Spirit shall be in the ordinances, and that he will render them effectual for the ends for which they were instituted. It is his grace that animates and enlivens them: for without it they are but dead letters, mere carnal ordinances, which profit nothing to the edifying of the soul: but when he quickens them with his divine presence, then they build up and strengthen the believer, and are the means of his growing in grace.

If, then, any of you are sensible of your having but weak faith, wait upon God for the strengthening of it; and wait in the ways of his ordinances. In them he has promised to be found of those that seek him. You will find his Spirit present in the word, in prayer, and in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Keep near to them, and God will give you food for your souls, enabling you in the strength of it to get more power over sin, and to be more alive unto God.

The word is expressly said to be the means of spiritual life, Psalm cxix. 50: thy word hath quickened me: and it is also the means of the growth of this spiritual life, according to the apostle: "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." But then, in order that we may thus grow by the word, faith must be mixed with it. St. Paul tells the Thessalonians, 1 Epistle, ii. 13, "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Faith makes it work effectually; and unless faith be mixed and incorporated, as it were, with it, it does not profit: for we are assured that the ancient Jews had the same gospel preached unto them that we

have; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

If you cannot mix faith with the word preached, so as to find yourself growing in grace and strength, can you pray? Prayer is the appointed means of receiving a supply of all your wants from the fulness of Christ Jesus. Ask, and ye shall have all that he has purchased and all that he has to give: for his promise is very extensive, Matt. xxi. 22: "All things," without any exception, "whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing," if faith has any ground in the word of promise to believe, that it shall receive what it asks, "ye shall receive it." Encouraged by this promise, ask humbly whatever God had promised to give. Do you find yourself unable to follow the footsteps of the flock? Cannot you keep near the shepherds' tents? But are you drawn away from attending upon the ordinances by the manifold temptations of sin and Satan, of the world and the flesh? Pray for power to fight against these enemies, and Christ will make you more than conqueror. The more you pray, the stronger you will grow. Out of weakness you shall be made strong. And by waiting constantly upon the Lord, you shall renew your strength—strength to mortify sin, and strength to be alive unto God; yea, by waiting upon God, you will receive the fulness of joy: for thus has the God that heareth prayer encouraged you to pray always and not to faint: "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." And

Where should we wait upon God for the renewing of our strength and for the fulness of joy, but at his own table? Has not the Lord appointed that his body should be meat indeed, and that his blood should be drink indeed, being the true spiritual food and strengthening of our souls? Our reformers certainly looked upon the Lord's supper in this light; for to the question in the Catechism, "What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?" they have given this answer: "The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine." The elements are the instituted signs of that life which Christ purchased by the offering of his body and by the shedding of his blood. They are signs to all who understand their meaning; but seals to those persons only who are united to Christ by faith, and grafted as branches into the true vine. Wait upon him then, my brethren, in the appointed means for the continuance and growth of this divine life. Be found obedient to his command, Eat this bread, and drink of this cup—Do this in remembrance of me—and you will receive something more at the Lord's table than mere signs. In the bread you will, by faith, partake of the body, and in the cup you will partake of the blood of Christ, administering to your soul that divine life which he begins here in grace, and carries on for ever and ever in glory.

These are the instituted means in which the weak in faith ought to wait upon the Lord: and he has encouraged them to wait upon him in these means with a promise that he will therein be found of them that seek him, and will strengthen and establish their hearts in the faith. We are his witnesses, that he is faithful and just to fulfil his promises. We attest this upon our own experience. We found ourselves growing in grace by attendance upon the ordinances. We expected to receive freely what God had freely promised, and we are not disappointed of our hope. And this will be your happy experience, my brethren, who are now endeavouring to follow the footsteps of the flock. Keep near the shepherds' tents. Attend close upon the ordinances, and you will grow strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. And when you are strong, beware of spiritual pride. Beware of being drawn away from the ordinances, as if they were not as necessary for you now as they were formerly. Remember that you stand in the Lord's strength, and he expects you should wait upon him for the continuance of it. And if you leave off attending upon the ordinances, because you think you are strong in faith, it is just as if a strong man should fancy he had no occasion to eat any more, because of his great strength. Our souls want continual supplies of grace, as our bodies stand in need of daily bread. And God has promised to make the ordinances food for his children, and he daily fulfils his promises to them. They find the quickening Spirit in the ordinances, commu-

nicating to them life, and comfort, and strength, according to their several wants and necessities.

And, as if these were not sufficient motives to encourage you to wait upon God in the way of his ordinances, he has promised to do more for those who wait therein than they can either ask or think: "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways." Isaiah lxiv. 4, 5. Let us then remember God in his ways, and in these ways he will meet us with a blessing. Whatever he has promised, he will certainly fulfil. Wait upon him, and you shall not be ashamed. Follow the flock, and you shall be safe. Follow them, as they followed Christ, and you will be kept as they were. And let us look up to him for his gracious help to enable us to follow the steps of their faith, humbly praying to him in the words of our church, and saying,

"O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord, grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Amen.* (Collect for All Saints' Day.)

DISCOURSE VI.

Chap. iv. ver. 16.

Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.

In the foregoing chapter, the believing soul had been in a dull heavy frame, but, being concerned and uneasy about it, had desired the quickening influences of Christ's grace. Christ here answers these desires. He calls for the wind to come and blow upon his garden. The wind is the scripture emblem and representative of the Holy Spirit. When he descended upon the disciples, on the day of Pentecost, he came in this his known emblem, in a rushing mighty wind, and it follows, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost:" filled with his gifts and graces. For the same good purpose his influence is here required. He is to blow upon the garden with his several operations, to quicken those things that were ready to die, and to bring forth the sweet perfumes of the graces of his own planting. "Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." May the enlivening Spirit bring the sweet experience of these words to all your hearts. As he is the omnipresent God, he is here with us: Oh that he may be present in these his gracious offices. Like the sharp penetrating north wind, may he awaken conviction, and then come, like the mild and soft south wind, with his comforts, that he may plant his graces in us, and cause the spices of them to flow out. God grant these may be the happy effects of our considering,

First, The sense and meaning of the words.

Secondly, Of our defending the doctrine contained in them. And

Thirdly, Of our applying them to our spiritual use and benefit.

And first, Let us consider the sense of the words. Christ is the speaker. He had been comparing the church to a garden which he had inclosed from the wilderness of the world. He had taken it in for his own use, and had set in it trees of righteousness, which he had moved out of the common waste, where they grew wild by nature, and had transplanted them into his garden. The faithful are the trees, which the heavenly husbandman sets in his own paradise: and by his cultivation, by being watered with his grace, and by clear shining after rain, from being wild and barren by nature, they are changed,

and they become trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified: "for herein," says the blessed Jesus, "is my Father glorified; that ye bring forth much fruit." The Lord has no barren trees in his paradise. Before he transplanted them, they were a seminary of all evil weeds; they brought forth nothing that was good: but when once set in his garden, they had a new spirit put into them, from whence come the seeds of all graces. For thus Christ, in this chapter, describes his garden. Its plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, camphire with spikenard; spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices. Upon this garden, thus enriched like the paradise of God, he calls the wind to blow, that it may bring forth the fragrancy of all its chief spices. The wind is the agent that was to make them flow out. And wind is air in motion—air in action. This was the first mover in the formation of the world: and it is still the principal mover in the formation and growth of every tree and plant. Natural historians have lately demonstrated, by undoubted experiments, that none of them can live without air. They want it as much as animals do. By it the odoriferous kind diffuse their fragrancy. The air is the cause that first draws out, and then spreads abroad, their sweet perfumes. And by it the fruit-bearing kind will soon be adorned with beautiful blossoms, and in their season with rich and ripe fruit. Their vegetable life, with all the operations of it, depends upon the air, in like manner as our spiritual life, with all the operations of it, depends upon the Holy Spirit, of whom the air was the instituted type. In our present embodied state we cannot see spiritual but through the glass of material objects. We are confined to sense. And therefore God has been pleased to make use of sensible things in nature to represent the spiritual things in grace. He has drawn a just and perfect parallel. In the works of creation he has given us an expressive image of every spiritual object with which he saw it needful for us to be acquainted. Of himself, of his essence, of his personality, and of the offices of the divine persons in the economy of the covenant, he has set before our eyes, in the agency of nature, a lively picture: for the grand agent in nature is the air, which is one in essence, whether it be rarefied to its smallest parts in the action of fire at the orb of the sun, or sent out in light, or returned in gross air to maintain and carry on this action of fire at the orb of the sun: in which soever of these three distinct operations it be employed, it is still air; and accordingly, this unity of its essence, and distinction of its threefold agency, is declared in scripture to be the instituted type in which we are to read the unity of the divine essence and the offices of the three divine persons. The Psalmist, referring to the created image, says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." The heavens are not empty space, for that could declare nothing, but they are the air in its three distinct offices, each of which is a record of God's glory. For, as the apostle explains the point, "The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world:" the invisible things themselves cannot be seen; but they may be seen by the creation, "and understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and Godhead." So that there is a picture in the things which are made, whereby we may understand the things of God which are not made. And this picture, so far as I am concerned to explain it at present, is the threefold agency of the air, in which are represented the offices of the three divine agents in carrying on the work of salvation. The covenant itself, and the distinct offices of the persons, were for the equal glory of each. It pleased the Father to get glory to the divine justice and holiness by demanding full satisfaction for sin. He was the avenger of sin, and therefore air, in the action of fire, is his emblem: he is called in scripture a consuming, a devouring fire, and a jealous God. It pleased the Son to get glory to the divine love and mercy by paying this satisfaction; and therefore his constant name in scripture is light, which is the life of the material world as he is the life of the spiritual world. And it pleased the eternal Spirit to get glory to all the divine attributes by inspiring dead sinners with a desire to be raised to newness of life, and then by breathing it into their souls, and carrying it on through the life of grace until he bring them to the life of glory; and therefore

he knows no other name in scripture than Spirit, or air in motion. The very same word that stands for the breath we breathe, both in the Hebrew and Greek, signifies the Holy Spirit. Why was this usage of scripture? Was it from the poverty of these languages? No. It was to show us the perfect likeness and resemblance there is between what air does to the body and what the Holy Spirit does to the soul. He is the breath of its life. Our souls can no more live to God without his grace than our bodies can without air. And after we have received his grace, are quickened and made alive by it, we want its influence every moment to support and to carry on the life which he has given, in like manner as we want breath every moment to support and to carry on our animal life: without it the body can do no work: without his grace the soul can do none. The necessity of his continually breathing into our souls the breath of life is beautifully represented in the text. He is there described under his known emblem, wind or air in motion; and what air is to the trees of the garden, that is he to the spirits of men. Both are alike necessary. Nothing can grow in the garden without air, neither can any grace grow in our souls unless the Holy Spirit act in these his two offices. "Awake, O north wind; and come thou south wind." The sun is never in the northern point of the heavens; and therefore the north wind is cold, sharp, and piercing: but the sun is always in the south; and therefore the south wind is of a contrary quality, being warm, soft, and comforting. The influences of both are necessary: the north wind was to awake: it was to be the first mover: the Holy Spirit was to begin in this office: for all men lay in the dead sleep of sin, without the least motion of spiritual life, until the Holy Spirit awaken them. And his general method of awakening sinners is to inspire them with conviction of sin. He opens their eyes, shows them their guilt, and lets them see their danger. And this is very painful and distressing; and therefore it is compared to the north wind, which, in the first work of grace, awakens and acts with all the sharpness of conviction upon the sinner's heart. Here Christ calls it to act upon the faithful members of his church; not to bring them into the deep distress which persons under conviction of sin are commonly in, but to preserve in them a lively sense of their own insufficiency, and of their dependence upon him. This is necessary to keep them always humble, and to make them always ready to ascribe the glory of what God has done in them to the riches of his free grace. And therefore we find that the Holy Spirit works this temper in all the faithful. None have such clear humbling views of themselves as they have, which empty them of self, and dispose them to receive more and more of the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit. And these are here described under the character of the south wind—gentle, and mild, and comforting. It is observable, that the south wind was not to awake, but to come—the sinner must be awakened, and convinced of his guilt and danger before he is comforted. This is God's method of acting. His good Spirit first makes men feel how miserable they are without a Saviour, and then he gives them the comfort of knowing their interest in him. He awakes and blows upon them like the sharpest blasts of the pinching north wind, and then he comes with the comfortable breathings of the gentle south. Both these are necessary: for Christ calls for both to blow upon his garden. The original word, here rendered to blow, is translated, in the 2nd chapter of Genesis, to breathe, when spoken of God's infusing an immortal spirit into the body of Adam: "And the Lord God formed the man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils a soul of life." Elihu ascribes this to the Holy Spirit, as an economical act of his office, Job xxxiii. 4. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." In the very same manner our Lord represented the operation of the Holy Spirit, John xx. 22. "He breathed on his disciples, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:" he breathed on them to denote, by this outward and visible sign, the inward and spiritual breathing of the Holy Spirit, which he then gave them. Our souls are not alive to God until he infuse into them this divine breath, as you may read at large in the parable of the dry bones, Ezek. xxxvii. And his continual breathing upon the faithful soul is as necessary as this first act; and therefore it is spoken of in the text by the same word: "Breathe with every gracious influence, O divine Spirit,

upon my faithful people, that the spices in them may flow out." The spices are certainly the graces of Christ, which he freely bestows upon us who are united to him the head of life and influence, and which are quickened and exercised by his good Spirit. And when he enables us to bring them into continual use and practice, then they become an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing unto God.

The words thus explained offer these particulars to our serious consideration. First, We are here reminded of the state in which all men are while they continue in the barren desolate wilderness of nature. Secondly, We learn by what means Christ's people are transplanted out of the wilderness into the garden of the church, where they grow and flourish; and, Thirdly, the cause is described, that makes the spices in them to flow out, and enables them to bring forth fruit unto everlasting life. These are the great truths contained in the text, which I am under my second general head to defend, from the authority of God's word.

And First—Our state by nature is not a state of grace. We are not born in the garden of the church, but in the wilderness of the world, in a dry barren land, where no water is—no dew nor rain, no kindly influence of heaven, to make us grow in grace. In this barren soil we are like the wild olive-tree; we bear no fruit until the heavenly husbandman move us and graft us, contrary to nature, in the good olive-tree: for you know it is contrary to nature to graft a wild scion upon a good stock; it is against the common practice in all other trees but the olive. And therefore the apostle, Rom. xi., uses this instance to represent the taking of the Gentiles into the church of God. The wild olive, like man in his natural state, bears no fruit but when he is grafted like the wild scion upon the good olive; then he bears forth fruit abundantly. He can bear no fruit of himself; for our blessed Saviour, speaking of the branches not bearing fruit except they abide in the stock upon which they were grafted, declares, No more can ye, except ye abide in me; for without me ye can do nothing. In yourselves you are like the ground, which was cursed for your sakes, and which naturally brings forth nothing but thorns and thistles.

When the Holy Spirit first begins to move in our hearts, he convinces us of these truths. He lets us see how barren we are by nature, and unfruitful. He shows us, that in us dwelleth no good thing, and that we have nothing but sin in ourselves. He makes us feel the burden of our sins. It presseth us sore, and forceth us to cry earnestly for deliverance. When he has thus, like the north wind, pierced us with the sharpness of conviction, then is he ready to administer comfort by transplanting us out of the wilderness into the garden of his church, where, under his mild influence, we may grow and flourish: and this is the second doctrinal point in the text worthy of our consideration.

We cannot transplant ourselves any more than a tree in a bad soil can transplant itself into a good one. But all the faithful are the trees of the Lord's planting. They are taken out of the wilderness, and removed into the paradise of God, where they are set, that they may be called trees of righteousness—the planting of the Lord—that he may be glorified in their bearing much fruit. The whole work of bringing us from a barren to a fruitful state, from a bad soil to a good one, is the Lord's. It is he who maketh us to be like a tree planted by the water-side, that will bring forth his fruit in due season: his leaf also shall not wither, and, look! whatsoever he doth it shall prosper. As it is the action of the air which first begins and afterwards carries on the vegetable life in every tree and plant, so is it the action of the Spirit which first begins and afterwards carries on spiritual life. We should not even have a desire for it unless he put it into our hearts; and the carrying of it on is the continuance of his work, as much as the life of a tree depends on the continuance of the action of the air upon it: for we are helpless and without strength either to begin or to carry on spiritual life but as we are endued with power from on high. All the work is the Lord's: for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do.

Now, it is the same hand which first plants us that afterwards waters us with the dew of his heavenly grace, and makes us fruitful. This is the third doctrinal point in the text. All our graces come from the Holy Spirit. He first plants them in us, and then makes the spices of them to flow out. We cannot doubt

of these truths, because we have often assented to them when we repeated the Nicene Creed. I wish we had all experienced the truth of the words: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life:" he is the Lord and giver of all spiritual and divine life. The life itself, whereby we live unto God, and all the offices of it, work in us that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing unto every man his own gifts, as he will. His own gifts are all the graces of the Christian life. Faith, hope, love, with every sweet and heavenly temper, are his gifts: for they are called the fruits of the Spirit. Sin is our own. Our soil bears nothing else. It grows weeds, thorns and thistles, without any cultivation. Our earth is a mother to them; but a step-mother to every grace. Whatever there is in us, besides weeds, is the free gift of the Holy Spirit. Every good thought, and word, and work, every step we take in our Christian life, is from him. And when he has inspired any thing good into us, he does not leave us to ourselves to improve it. No. It is God that giveth the increase. He worketh in us both to will and to do, according to the Psalmist's prayer, "Stablish the thing, O God, that thou hast wrought in us." He stirs up his own gifts and graces, keeps them in exercise, and makes the spices of them to flow out. When we work in his strength, we work what is well-pleasing. God the Father sees us in his Son, partakers of righteousness, and led by his Spirit; and then the sweet odour of our services ascends with acceptance to the throne of his grace. St. John has given us a beautiful image of the manner in which our very best services, even the prayers and praises of God's own people, become acceptable. It is not for any merit in them. It is not because they flow from fervent affections, that they are set before God as incense, and that the lifting up of our hands is an evening sacrifice. But it is through Christ that our very prayers are pleasing unto the Father: for thus we read, Rev. viii. 2: "The angel of the covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up with acceptance before God out of the angel's hand." Here we see that our best prayers are nothing worth unless presented before God by the Redeemer, and perfumed with the sweet incense of his merits. When he presents them before the throne of grace, they then become his prayers, and how can the Father deny the requests of his beloved Son? He will answer them, either by giving us what we ask, or something else, that he sees will be much better for us. If, then, we would profit and be fruitful under the means of grace; if we would have the spices of our prayers and praises, and our other religious services, to ascend with acceptance before God, let us look up to the Holy Spirit, and entreat him to enable us to apply what has been said to our own hearts. And may he blow upon us with his gracious inspiration, while I am, in the

Third place, Drawing some practical inferences from what has been said.

The church is here compared to a garden; the faithful to trees of righteousness which the Lord hath planted; the Holy Spirit to wind, which is to blow upon the trees, and which makes the spices thereof to flow out, as the Holy Spirit brings forth into use and exercise the graces of the faithful. This is the doctrine: and, that we may improve by it, let us examine ourselves, whether we are as gardens and trees, whom the Lord hath planted, and in whom he is glorified. Have we been taken out of the wilderness and transplanted into the paradise of God? Has the Holy Spirit awakened the north wind to convince us of sin, and come with the south wind to comfort us? Has he united us to Christ, engrafted us into the true vine, and do our tender grapes give a pleasant smell? Does he call forth the graces which he has given us, and let the spices of them flow out in daily exercise, so that men, seeing our fruitfulness, glorify our Father which is in heaven? Happy are they who thus flourish like a palm-tree, and grow like a cedar in Libanus. If you be thus happy, my brethren, you cannot but know it, and feel it, and be thankful to God for it; and to those amongst you who are not in this happy case, I will make my first application. May the Spirit of the living God open your understandings to profit from what I have to say!

If you be not united to Christ by faith on your part, and by the bond of the Spirit on Christ's part, and thereby enabled to bring forth fruit unto everlasting life, consider how dangerous your situation is. There are two spirits, which divide the world between them: you must be led by one or the other, by the Holy Spirit, or by the evil spirit. And you cannot be at a loss to know under whose influence you are. By their fruits ye may know them. This is an infallible mark, which the apostle has largely insisted upon in the fifth chapter of the Galatians, where he has given us a description at length of the fruits of the Spirit, and of the abominable deeds of the flesh, which are the fruits of the devil. Read the description, and then judge to whom you belong. What flows out of your hearts? What do your tongues delight to be talking of, and your hands to handle, and your feet to run into? What appears in your lives and conversations? Surely you cannot be at a loss to know what sort of fruit you bear. You cannot be ignorant whether you live to the flesh, or to the Spirit. If you abound in the fruits of righteousness, and the spices thereof are continually flowing out, a sweet smelling savour acceptable to God and to all around you; if thus, through the Spirit, you bear your fruit unto holiness; then the end will be everlasting life: but if ye live to the flesh, says God, ye shall die—die from God and glory —ye shall die both the first and the second death.

While you are in this dangerous state, how do you keep your consciences quiet? Have you persuaded yourselves that the doctrine is not true? Do you think there is no necessity for bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit? But remember that you must be bringing forth some fruit: and which would you bring forth? Whether what is pleasing to God, or what is displeasing? Certainly what is pleasing. And by whose power and might can you bring it forth? Not by your own. You are by nature helpless and without strength to bring forth any acceptable fruit: for Christ himself, speaking on this very subject, says, "Without me ye can do nothing." Be persuaded, then, to apply to him for faith, that ye may be ingrafted into him the true vine, and may bear much and ripe fruit to the glory of God.

But still the doctrine does not appear to you in a clear light. What is the reason? It is because you are in the flesh and in your natural state, and the motions of sin which are by the law do work in your members to bring forth fruit unto death. Sin has such power over you that you love its dead works, and you hate holiness. You would thank God for making you holy just when you are dying: at the last hour you would like well enough to bring fruit unto God, and to have your spices flowing out: but you cannot bear the thoughts of living a holy life. Is not this your case? If it be, is not your faith a dead faith? And how, then, can you be a living member of Christ? for you were never ingrafted into him the true vine. And if you should be cut off in this state, read your sentence: the God who is to judge you has already declared, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." May the Holy Spirit set this scripture home with full conviction upon your consciences, that you may follow me with profit in my

Second application to those who are seeking to be united to Christ, and are desirous of glorifying him by bringing forth much fruit. Examine carefully, my brethren, whether you seek aright. Have you a single eye to God's glory? And do you indeed pray that his will may be done in you? Would you receive Christ in all his offices? Do you desire him as your king? and would you have his kingdom set up within you to destroy in you the reign of sin, as well as your prophet and priest to save you from the guilt and punishment of sin? Are you willing he should make you holy as well as happy? If it be the sincere desire of your heart to have the dominion of sin destroyed in your mortal body, then you may take courage. And if you are also set upon attaining the graces of Christ, and would have them in use and exercise, the sweet spices of them continually flowing out, then seek, and you shall find. You have the promise of God to rely upon; and he cannot deny himself. Seek him with humility in the ways wherein he has promised to be found of them that seek him. Attend upon him in the ways of the ordinances. In them wait, and be assured that

when it will be for God's glory and your comfort, the Holy Spirit, who has already awakened the north wind to convince you of sin, will also come with the mild south wind to refresh and comfort your hearts, and to unite you to Jesus Christ, in whom you may bring forth much fruit. And to those who are in this happy state I make my third and last inference.

The faithful, in the text, desired the Holy Spirit would make them more lively and fruitful. And the faithful still have the same desires, which are at this time more fervent and earnest, because they hear it objected to their most holy faith, that it makes no change in men's lives and conversations: for which reason they pray for more grace, and to have it more in use and exercise, that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. They would have all men who see their lives to behold the great change that the Holy Spirit has wrought in them. While they grew in the wilderness, they were like other wild barren trees; but being removed into the garden of the church of Christ, and become trees of the Lord's planting, they now bear much fruit. And, like as the air draws forth the rich fragrancy of the aromatic flowers, and diffuses their sweet odours all around, so the Holy Spirit keeps in action the graces of the faithful, and makes the spices thereof to flow out to the glory of God, and to the delight and good of mankind.

Pray, then, my Christian friends and brethren, for the continual influences of the Holy Spirit: these are as necessary for the growth of grace in your soul as the blowing of the air is to the growth of the fruits of the garden. Convinced of this great truth (and you are convinced of it by happy experience), apply to the Holy Spirit for what you stand in need of every moment; and pray him to awaken the north wind whenever its sharp influences are necessary, either to awaken secure sinners, or to quicken and stir up the graces of the faithful, and then to come, like the south wind, with his mild and comforting influences, blowing upon the garden, upon the believer, and making the spices thereof, the graces in him, to flow out. And thus may the Holy Spirit enable you and me to experience this scripture in its fullest sense to the glory of God and to the good of others, and to the comfort of our own souls. May the blessed and adorable Jesus send his good Spirit to lead us all to, and to graft us all into him, the true vine, that we may live unto God, and flourish and be fruitful. Grant, O gracious Saviour, that every branch in thee which beareth fruit may be purged, and may bring forth more fruit, even rich and ripe fruit, which endureth unto everlasting life, to the honour of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three self-existent persons in one Jehovah; to whom we give equal praise, majesty, and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE VII.

Chap. v. ver. 16.

Yea, he is altogether lovely.

The Holy Spirit puts these words into the mouth of the believer. He has been drawing a character of his beloved Jesus, and has compared him to the most useful and noble objects in the creation, in order to set forth his due praise. But upon reviewing the character he finds it fall short of the perfection of his divine Saviour. It did not come up to the idea which he himself had formed of him, and therefore he finishes in one word: "Yea, he is altogether lovely." He is all loveliness. Whatever is lovely and desirable upon earth, whatever is lovely and desirable in heaven—all the graces of time, and all the blessings of eternity—centre in him as their proper source, and flow from him as their proper fountain. Whatever can be proposed to the understanding as excellent; whatever the will, rightly disposed, can desire; whatever the heart and the affections can be set upon and find happiness in; all this is to be met with in the Lord Jesus, and nowhere else: for, "he is altogether lovely," all beauty, all excellency in him-

self. And this consideration should endear to us his inherent excellencies, that he is willing to communicate them. This should give a new grace to each, and make it more valuable in our eyes. He is not only altogether lovely, but will also make vile and abominable sinners, when they apply to him for his righteousness, altogether lovely in the sight of God. He will wash them clean from all their sins in his most precious blood, and will clothe them with his all-perfect righteousness, in which they shall appear at the bar of justice without spot of sin unto salvation.

Now, since the Lord Jesus is all loveliness, what can be the reason that he does not appear altogether lovely in the eyes of men? The generality of them see nothing lovely in him. What was formerly said upon the occasion is still true: "Lord, who hath believed our report?" The word of God reports him to be altogether lovely; and the ministers of God preach his loveliness as testified by scripture and their own experience; but worldly men see no form nor comeliness in him, that they should desire him. They see more loveliness in sin, in pleasure, in money, in diversions, than they hope to find in our Lord and Saviour. This dangerous mistake arises either from the judgment or the affections. Either they do not see how perfectly lovely Jesus Christ is, or else the affections are prejudiced against him: but, wherever the mistake lies, I will offer some scripture arguments to remove it; and may God accompany them with the effectual working of his power, while I am setting before you,

First, What Jesus Christ is, as man.

Secondly, What he is, as God. And

Thirdly, What he is, as the incarnate God—as God and man united in one person. And in each of these respects I hope the Holy Spirit will convince you that Jesus Christ is altogether lovely.

And first, Let us view him as man. I mention not his person, though the Psalmist says he was fairer than the children of men. The excellencies and endowments of his mind were so great and uncommon, that I need not insist on a less important part of the subject. For consider, what is it that you admire and love in any person? Do extraordinary gifts or graces draw your esteem? Great abilities or great virtues? Behold, every thing that can adorn or dignify the human nature meets in the man Christ Jesus. If true wisdom and learning be your admiration, it is written, that "in him were laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Do you think that learning never appears so graceful as when it is set off with the charms of virtue? Then look upon Jesus. In him you see not this or that particular virtue only, but virtue itself in a body of flesh; and therefore made flesh, that he might let his graces shine before men, and communicate their sweet influence. He was goodness itself; and he went about doing good to the souls and to the bodies of men, teaching and enlightening the ignorance of their understanding, and regulating the depravity of the will and affections, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of bodily infirmities. There was not a malady which sin had brought upon soul or body but what he proved himself almighty to heal. Was there ever such a character as this? So universally amiable and lovely? Here is a person of all the sons of men the greatest and happiest in himself, and capable of making us great and happy; yea therefore made man, that he might communicate to us his greatness and happiness. And shall any of us be so far lost to all sense of what is great and happy as not to admire this character? Shall men adore and idolize the true patriot whose breast burns with love for his country, and who freely hazards his all to save it? And shall the very same men be wanting in esteem for the great patriot of the whole world? How absurd, how inconsistent would this be!

What a contradiction is it to throw away all our admiration upon lesser excellencies, and to have none to spare for him who had every excellency that can adorn the human nature, either for beauty or use, and who consequently had every thing that could make him altogether lovely!

If I should stop here, enough has been said to place the man Jesus high above the sons of men: but I have mentioned the least and lowest part of his character. He was not only great and good, but had also one thing peculiar to himself—

that no sinful frailty or weakness ever sullied his greatness or his goodness He was a perfect man. You will not find any other character without its spots and blemishes, because there is no man living without sin; our nature itself being sinful, and sin is the cause of all our imperfections. The darkness of the understanding in the things of God comes from sin; and the weakness of the memory, and the continual inclinations of the will to evil, and the strong and unlawful attachment of the heart to the world and to the things of it, spring from the same fountain of sin. But the holy Jesus had no sin, and consequently none of the imperfections which sin has brought upon us. When a truth was proposed to his understanding, there was no obstruction in the faculty; he comprehended it clearly and fully. His will was in harmony with God's will: "I delight," says he, "to do thy will, O my God;" and he did it with all his heart, always and perfectly. And accordingly we read of him in the Psalms, that "he spake the truth in his heart;" his tongue and his heart always went together; "he had clean hands," not once defiled with any sinful pollution, "and a pure heart;" not one evil thought had ever arisen in it; nay, "his mind had never been lift up unto vanity;" not one vain thought had ever passed through his mind. Judge then how perfectly immaculate he must have been! for who is there among us that has not had a thousand, yea ten thousand, vain and wandering thoughts? Who does not find them passing through his mind against his will, and intruding into his hours of devotion, from which he had shut them out, and haunting him even at the Lord's table? But Christ's pure and spotless mind never admitted one vain thought. He was the very image of God, in which the first Adam was made; and he did not deface it, as the first Adam did, but he kept it holy and undefiled. The scripture assures us of it: "He was made sin for us who knew no sin." He asserts it of himself: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Happy for us, Satan could find in him no part of our fallen image, and therefore the accuser of the brethren could lay no charge against his person, nor consequently against the merit of those actions and sufferings whereby we, who have by nature borne the image of the earthy, may, through grace, bear the image of the heavenly Adam, who is the Lord from heaven.

My brethren, weigh and consider this part of our Lord's character. Is he not altogether lovely? And have you, then, no praise or admiration to bestow upon him? Whatever you see reason to admire in any man, if it be indeed praiseworthy, it was in its perfect degree in Christ Jesus; and therefore certainly you will not withhold from him his tribute of praise. If your praise follow excellency, behold, here is a man not only the chief among ten thousand, but also the chief of the human race. A man that never had his fellow—a perfect man. He has every good gift, and every grace that can be in man. And will you not admire and esteem such a character? Does he not appear to you altogether amiable? If you see any thing wanting in him, it is an argument of your own imperfection: for he, whose all-searching eye trieth the very hearts and reins, saw no way of wickedness in him. He pronounced him to be his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; and he honoured him with a wonderful glory, never communicated to any creature but to the man Jesus: he was united to God the Son in so close and intimate a union, that God and man were one Christ as much as the reasonable soul and flesh are one man. Oh how great is the mystery of godliness!—God manifest in the flesh! How can we sufficiently admire and adore it! And how greatly should it endear to us the humanity of our Lord, that it was the sacred temple of the Godhead, inhabited by God the Son, and honoured with the more immediate presence of the Father and the Holy Spirit! for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, even the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Surely, then, the man Jesus was altogether lovely, since he was lovely in the eyes of the eternal Trinity, who vouchsafed to dwell and to make their abode in him. Oh, blush then and be ashamed, ye sinful worms, who see nothing lovely in Jesus Christ, since the most blessed God sees him altogether lovely. Can ye find no comeliness in him, of whom the Father hath said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And are not ye well pleased with him, ye ungrateful men, for whom he was made man? Pardon,

Lord Jesus, our low opinion of the dignity of thy human nature. Let thy good Spirit teach us to form more exalted ideas of thee, while I am

Secondly, Speaking of the glory of thy divine nature.

All loveliness is certainly in God, inherent in him as the fountain, from whence flows whatever is lovely in the creation. And if Jesus Christ be the true God, then he must have every attribute and perfection that can endear him to his creatures, and make him altogether lovely in their eyes: and that he is the true God is as certain as that there is a God. The scripture has given him the names and the attributes of God, and has ascribed to him the works which none but the almighty Creator and the all-wise Preserver of the world could perform. He is called Jehovah, the incommunicable name of the Divine Essence, and Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. He is said to be omniscient and omnipresent, to have created all things, and to uphold them by the word of his power: he came in the flesh to redeem them; and there is a day at hand when he will come to judge them. And will any man say that these are the attributes and works of a creature? Do they not evidently belong to the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, of whom the Old Testament says that he is God, the Saviour, and that there is none other, as Isaiah xlv. 21, 22: "There is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour: there is none beside me—Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." The apostle teaches the same doctrine in the New Testament, where he says, Rom. ix. 5, "That Christ is over all, God blessed for ever." *Amen.*

In these two passages (not to mention others) the Saviour is expressly said to be God—God over all, and consequently he must be altogether lovely; for every perfection which has any claim to our love is inherent in him; and whatever we see of loveliness in the works of nature owes its being to his divine wisdom, and power, and goodness; so that, whenever you see any thing worthy of your admiration, it should lead your thoughts up to Jesus Christ, the almighty Creator and Preserver of it. If you stop short of him, you rob him of his honour; because its loveliness is his. And what, then, must he be, how perfectly lovely and amiable, who is the great parent and author of all loveliness? Whatever sweetness and excellency you find in the creatures, is but a faint ray of the Creator's perfections, and was reflected from him upon them, to give you an idea of his loveliness. Admire him therefore in it. In all the beauties of nature you may trace the beauties of Jesus Christ the God of nature, who is the first cause from whom they all flow, and who is the last end, into whom they will be all finally resolved.

But I need not enlarge upon this point. God has certainly every perfection in himself. He is altogether lovely. But in what respects does he appear so to sinners? While they are under guilt, and sensible of their danger, they have no reason to love God: for, being transgressors of his holy law, condemned by its just sentence, which conscience owns to be just, subject to present death, and to eternal misery, how can they see any thing lovely in that God who may get glory to all his attributes by their destruction? In this view they must see every thing that can make God terrible, but nothing to render him lovely. Until they know that he will be reconciled unto them, and forgive them all their sins, they can have no reason to love him. The gospel alone can set forth to them the loveliness of God; which it does, by revealing unto us an incarnate God, God and man united in one Christ, who is altogether lovely in the eyes of his redeemed people, as I purposed in the third place to consider.

All our hopes of heaven are founded upon this truth, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself: for if the man Jesus was not united to the most blessed God, our religion is the grossest idolatry, and Christians are, of all men, most miserable. But the scripture has left no room to doubt of the union of the two natures in one Christ. The word was God, and the word was made flesh, says St. John; so that God the word was made flesh and incarnate. God was manifest in the flesh, says the beloved apostle Paul. And the reason was, he was manifested for our salvation. And it was expedient that the Saviour should be both God and man, because he was to obey and to suffer for us as

man, and to merit by his obedience and sufferings as God, and thereby to be a complete Saviour. Accordingly, he who thought it no robbery to be equal with God the Father, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made man. He obeyed, he suffered, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and when all the ends for which he obeyed, suffered, and died, were answered, then it was not possible that he should be holden any longer of death. Justice released him on the third day from the prison of the grave; and he rose again triumphant from the dead; whereby believers had full evidence given them, that all the demands of the law were satisfied, that Christ's sufferings had made a full atonement for what they should have suffered; that he had taken out the sting of death, and had opened unto them the gate of everlasting life; for, as he stood in their place as their great representative, all his victories are theirs, and by faith they know and are assured of their interest in them. And through him, who loved them and gave himself for them, they shall be saved from sin, and Satan, from suffering and death, from hell and everlasting torments. And they shall not only be saved through him from these their spiritual enemies, but they shall also receive joys unspeakable and full of glory, a happiness greater than tongue can utter, or heart conceive, a crown incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: for they shall be made kings and priests unto God and the Father, and they shall reign for ever and ever in fulness of joy, both in body and in soul: and all this shall be the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thus the Lord Jesus, under the character of the incarnate God, is altogether lovely. He has every grace and perfection that can render him amiable in the eyes of believers; for to them that believe he is precious. And he has every thing that can recommend him to the esteem of awakened and convinced sinners. He is just such a Saviour as they want. He has every thing to give that they stand in need of. The God-man has an inexhaustible fountain of grace, which always stands open for the relief of weary and heavy laden sinners, who come unto him seeking rest unto their souls. He calls unto them with this sweet voice: Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the vaters of comfort and salvation. Lo! here is pardon and peace, righteousness and holiness. All the graces that can make you lovely in the sight of God the Father—all the glories that can make you happy with him in eternity, are in my power to give. I purchased them for such sinners as you are, and I give them freely. Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find. And what should hinder them from answering him? Yea, they will answer. This is the very language of their hearts: Lord Jesus, help our unbelief. We are convinced that all the graces of time and all the glories of eternity are thy free gift; and we bless and praise thy holy name for putting it into our hearts to seek for the enjoyment of those graces and glories. All the loveliness of this lower world, all the loveliness of heaven itself is thine, centres in thy person, as the incarnate God, and flows from thee, as God made man, on purpose to make us, filthy and abominable sinners, lovely in the sight of thy heavenly Father. Oh that we may see clearly our interest in thee, and may know the incarnate God to be our Lord and our Saviour; and then our faith will behold thee altogether lovely, and shall admire no loveliness unless it bear thy fair image, and what leads us, through its beauties, to adore and praise thine.

And if Christ appear in this amiable light to those who are only seeking and desiring to experience his love and mercy, what thoughts must believers entertain of him? How must they value him? Certainly, he is with them altogether lovely. And have they not good reason to think him so? for what loveliness is there in heaven or earth but his? Is there not in his manhood every grace that can adorn the human nature? Is there not in his Godhead every infinite and eternal perfection? And do not these perfections flow through the manhood of the incarnate God, to render vile and polluted sinners altogether amiable and lovely? God and man were united in one Christ in order to save them from their sins; and he puts them into perfect possession of many of the benefits of his salvation, as pledges and earnests of his bestowing more: for he now awakens them and raises them from the death of sin to newness of life; he pardons their

past rebellions, sends his good Spirit into their hearts to shed abroad in them the comforts of his pardoning love, to fill them with joy and peace in believing, to enable them to mortify the body of sin, and to put on the new man which, after the image of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. All this is present salvation; the happiness of which is great beyond description. Oh! come then, my brethren, taste and see what the Lord Jesus has to give. Whatever your state and circumstances are, he can make you completely happy: for he has engaged that all things, adverse as well as prosperous, shall work together for good, for present and eternal good, to them that love him. And when you can love him, because he first loved you, then you will find that he is able to do exceeding abundantly for you, above all that you can either ask or think.

Upon this short view of our Lord's character, it appears that he is altogether lovely. He certainly has, as man, as God, and as the incarnate God, every perfection of heaven and earth. All that is amiable in itself, or ought to appear amiable to us, meets in him; and therefore, if we love what is amiable in itself, or what is good to us, we ought to give the first place in our hearts to the Lord Jesus. And does he, then, reign in them? Is he the sole Lord of your affections? Do you, my brethren, love him in sincerity, with a pure incorrupt love, and with all your hearts, and with all your minds, and with all your strength? Is his kingdom set up within you? and is it your delight to do the will of your Lord and of your God? Grace be with all them who thus love the Lord Jesus. But, alas! their number is but small: for melancholy it is to see how little the generality of men, called Christians, love him who is altogether lovely. The transient perishing objects of sense, the vanities, the follies of life, appear more lovely, and have more of their hearts, than that God whose servants and worshippers they profess themselves to be. Nay, the abominable deformity and horrid ugliness of sin seem to them more lovely. What can be the reason that men professing Christianity should be so inconsistent, and should make such a wrong judgment in so plain a case? Surely they must lay under some great delusion: for not to love him whom they call their God, and who is altogether lovely, is both a disgrace to their boasted reason, and is also acting against their own present and eternal interest. Sin is the cause of this monstrous delusion: it blinds the sinner's understanding, that he does not see his want of a Saviour, and consequently he cannot judge of the Saviour's worth. While he thinks himself whole, he sees no occasion for the physician. But so soon as conscience awakes, and he is made sensible of his guilt, and feels his misery, then he will desire the assistance of the great physician of souls, and will begin to value him. The more deeply he is convinced of sin, the more earnestly will he apply to the Lord Jesus who is able to save him from his sins. And as he partakes of the graces and blessings of salvation, the Saviour will grow more and more lovely in his eyes. And when conscience ceases to accuse, when the law no longer condemns, but he finds joy and peace in believing, then the Saviour will be altogether lovely. The believer will form higher ideas of him than he can find words to express: yea, he knows that his ideas of him cannot rise up to the greatness of his Lord's merits. As man he is far exalted above the children of men; as God, he is over all blessed for ever; and as God incarnate, he is the continual joy of the believer's heart, and the sweet subject of his praise here in time; and the song of the glorified spirits in heaven will be upon the riches of his grace; and they will never be able to exhaust the subject, or to search it to the bottom, because the riches of Christ are unsearchable, and infinite, and eternal.

Here, then, we are come to the root of the matter. Jesus is altogether lovely: but why do not all men who profess to worship him think him so? Because they do not find their want of him. They are under no concern about their sins, and have no desire to know the pardon of them, and therefore they see no reason to esteem the Saviour of sinners. They are ignorant of their own wants, and therefore they know not his worth; but basely, wickedly prefer the worthless things of this life to the Lord and giver of life and glory. Is not this the sad state of the generality of our people? And does not this evidently prove that they are Christians only in name? They have none of the spirit and power

of their religion, but in their lives dishonour that holy name by which they are called.

My brethren, are any of you in this state? Look up to God, and beg of him to show you the true state of your souls, that you may see how much you are concerned in what has been said. Are you indeed lovers of the Lord Jesus? Is he in your eyes altogether lovely? When the objects of sense flatter, and present themselves to your choice in the most alluring dress, then do you see your beloved Saviour the chief among ten thousand? Can you give up ten thousand of them for him? For him can you reject with disdain all that the world calls great and honourable, and looking upon Jesus to be all and in all? If you are not in this state, be assured that your hearts are not right with God: and if you neither see the perfect loveliness of Jesus Christ, nor desire to see it, then you are still under the power of sin, deluded and blinded by it; and, if God does not open your eyes to see the delusion, death will soon open them to your everlasting confusion. But if God has convinced you of sin, and you find your want of a Saviour, wait upon him, and he will give you many happy proofs of his perfect loveliness. You will experience his love in pardoning your sins, in justifying you from the guilt of them in making you the children of God, and in fitting you for his heavenly kingdom. Daily, as you find your interest more clearly in his redeeming love, you will partake more and more of his exceeding great and precious promises, whereby your love to him will increase, and you will find him more lovely. Faith will open to you the riches of his love, and show you how precious he is; for, to them that believe, he is precious; he is precious indeed to the believer. And he is not precious to all men, because they do not see their want of him, nor know what his free grace can do for them: for he has invited all weary and heavy-laden sinners to come and experience how happy he can make them. Whatever their wants may be, he is willing and able to supply them. If ye be but sensible of them, ask, my brethren, and he will relieve you. Be ye ever so black in yourselves, he can make you comely. Be your sins ever so many, ever so heinous, in his righteousness you may be presented before God the Father without spot of sin unto salvation. Have you thought ever so meanly of him, his good Spirit can give you reason to entertain more noble sentiments. Your ingratitude, your very blasphemies against him, may be pardoned, and much ingratitude, and many blasphemies are no bar to his free grace. This is the sweetest part of our Lord's character, and ought, above all, to endear him unto those who see their want of his help. Let them come ever so late, ever so guilty, the arms of his mercy are open to receive them. If you see nothing but sin in yourselves, yet go to him. His blood cleanseth from all sin. Implore his mercy, and see whether he will cast you out. Be not discouraged by looking into yourselves; you may be deformed enough; but remember that he is altogether lovely, and by faith you will know his loveliness is yours. He will wash you clean from every stain of sin in his most precious blood, and will present you before his Father in spotless purity. Be ye ever so defiled with uncleanness; have lust, drunkenness, or gluttony polluted the body; and the love of the world and of the things of the world still more polluted the soul; yet the fountain is open. Go, wash, and be clean. Sins deep as scarlet shall be as white as snow; sins like crimson shall be as wool. They that are washed in the Redeemer's blood stand before God's tribunal as white as snow, without spot of sin unto salvation.

My dearly beloved brethren, can ye believe these things? do ye assent to them? and yet, are ye not determined to apply to Jesus Christ for his graces and blessings? He invites you to come to him; and will you not come? Be ye ever so unworthy, he will make you worthy. Be ye ever so abominable in the sight of God, he will make you lovely. All your wants he is able and willing to supply. Why, then, do you choose to live without his graces and blessings? They may be had freely. Ask, and ye shall have. Only express your wants. Beg a supply from his bounty, and he that has done all for you will do all in you. Go, then, with your wants, whatever they be, to the throne of grace, and the incarnate God will supply them. He is more ready to give than you can be to ask. His heart is large and open. It is the same

tender heart which once bled to death for sinners: it cannot want love. And he is now on the throne of glory: he cannot want power. Apply to this loving God and Saviour of sinners, and he will convince you of your wants and of his worth. He will bestow upon you, out of his fulness, grace for grace, until you acknowledge with thankful hearts that the Lord Jesus is altogether lovely.

My Christian brethren, you can bear me witness that I have spoken but a small part of the Redeemer's praise: for you believe him to be a true and very man, and true and very God, united in one Christ; and you know, by sure scripture marks and evidences, that the one Christ is your Saviour; whereby you are interested in all that he did and suffered as man, and merited as God, and has now, as king-mediator, to bestow. Being thus enabled to say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his," you are convinced that your beloved is above all blessing and praise. You cannot reach the greatness of his merits. The poverty of language, the weakness of the human understanding, the coldness of your affections, are so many hindrances to your speaking of your God and Saviour as he deserves. And when you try to get over these obstacles, and have some hopes of success, yet then you find the corruptible body so presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle so weigheth down the mind, that praise dies away upon your lips. But you hope there is a time at hand, when your praises will be more perfect. When you shall be freed from all the frailties of this mortal life, you will then be better able to discover, and more constantly disposed to celebrate, the loveliness of your redeeming God. But even you will not be equal to the subject. Your praises will be but finite, and the adorable Redeemer is infinite. There is no proportion between them; no more than between time and eternity: and suppose you continue your praises to eternity, yet your happiness, your crowns of glory and palms of victory, your standing confirmed in bliss, are the free gifts of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. And how, then, can you worthily extol the riches of his free grace? How can you pay the debt that you owe to free grace? When you have praised him for millions of years, Jesus is still as lovely, your praise as much due, your joy in offering it as great, as when you began. There is still the same majesty in the brightness of that glory which shines in the face of Jesus Christ. He is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and light, you know, is sweet; yea, a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun. Oh how sweet, how pleasant, then, must it be to see the sun of righteousness shining in his glory! Surely he will then appear altogether lovely. Blessed are the eyes that shall then see the king in his beauty; and happy, for ever happy, are they who shall then praise him; but even then the highest strain of praise of angels and men united will not come up to the greatness of his merit. He will be more lovely than all the tongues of all the heavenly host will be able to express. And if the glorified spirits thus fail,

O thou incarnate God! whose glory the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain, pardon the low opinion we entertain of thine infinite excellencies; pardon the imperfect manner in which we have been speaking and thinking of thee. Thou knowest, Lord, that we desire to know thee more, and to praise thee better. Arise then, O thou bright and morning star, and shine into our hearts, dispelling the darkness of our understandings, and taking away the depravity of our wills and affections, that we may see thy loveliness, and our interest in it; and enable us daily to love thee more and more, until we behold thee face to face, and then we shall know that our Saviour and our God is altogether lovely. O thou adorable Jesus! admit us all to this blessed vision and fruition of thy Godhead. May all this congregation be in the happy number of thy redeemed people, who are to praise and admire thine infinite loveliness for ever and ever. So be it, to the honour and glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Divine Essence, to whom be equal praise and worship in heaven and earth, in time and in eternity. *Amen* and *Amen*.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Chap. v. ver. 16.

This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.

In the last discourse I endeavoured to recommend to you some of the loveliness of Jesus Christ. It was only some part of his loveliness: for we know it at present but in part. It is infinite, and surpasseth all understanding. The most enlightened mind cannot fully comprehend it, no not in heaven. We shall not be able in eternity to discover all the perfections of our incarnate God: and how then can we think or speak worthily of them at present? We must fall below the majesty of the subject; but that is no reason we should not treat of it. It is our duty and interest to think and to speak of our blessed Saviour in the most sublime ideas, and in the highest expressions, because we cannot exceed the greatness of his merits. He is above all blessing and praise: and so you will believe when you know him to be your Saviour. When the Spirit of wisdom and revelation enlightens the eyes of your understanding, then you will behold some of Christ's loveliness; and when you are enabled to say with true faith, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend," then his loveliness will appear to you with a new grace and excellency, because you will then see your interest in it.

This is the particular view in which I shall consider our Lord's loveliness at present. The believer knows him to be his beloved, and the perfections of Christ appear with a peculiar beauty through this endearing relation, because he can truly say, He that has these perfections is my beloved and my friend; he has them for me; I have a sure interest in them, in time and in eternity. My brethren, do the perfections of Christ appear to you in this light? Can you take up the words of the text and repeat them from your own experience? I fear there are not many of us who can: for the generality of men, called Christians, choose other beloveds and other friends than Jesus Christ. Many of them have no love for him; or, if he has any place at all, yet he has not the first place in their hearts and affections, no, not even in theirs, to whom he has been most bountiful. Where his favours have been great, there one might expect great returns of love; but we find no such thing in fact: not many worldly-wise and learned, not many rich and noble, repay his favours with thankfulness. Though Christ be altogether lovely, and ought to appear so to them, yet few of them love him. What can be the reason that men of genius, whom Christ has blessed with great gifts and talents, should make him no suitable returns of gratitude? and that men, who profess themselves to be his worshippers, should have no love for their God? The true cause is, they are in love with sin, and it blinds them. Christ is all beauty, but they have no eyes to see it; no, not even a desire to see it, until they begin to find the exceeding sinfulness of sin. When conscience is uneasy about the pardon of their sins, and they feel their want of a Saviour, then they will begin to desire his salvation, and God will hear their desires, and will open their eyes to see a precious Christ, and will give them faith to believe in him to the saving of the soul. Faith makes Christ appear precious: for it is the proper office of faith to enable us to behold Christ's excellencies; and it is the proper work of that faith which worketh by love to let us know our interest in them, by which every excellency appears to us more lovely. And the text describes this office, and also this work of faith. The believer first declares that Christ is altogether lovely, and then, that he knew Christ's loveliness was his. "This is my beloved, and this is my friend." He is my beloved, on whom my heart and mine affections are entirely placed; because he first loved me, and gave himself for me. He has shed abroad his love in my heart; and I know that my beloved is mine, and I am his. He is mine—my friend—who has my welfare at heart, and who will deny me nothing that can make me happy in time and in eternity. May the Spirit of the Lord Jesus open all your understandings to see, and all

your hearts to receive, these comfortable truths, while I am discoursing upon the words, and opening the sweet doctrine contained in them, by showing

First, What Christ has done to make himself the beloved and the friend of every believer.

Secondly, The believer's knowledge of his interest in it before he could say, This is my beloved, and this is my friend.

Thirdly, From whence arose the certainty of his knowledge.

Fourthly, The happiness he had in knowing certainly that Christ was his beloved and his friend. And then I will apply the whole, as God shall enable me, to your consciences.

And First, I am to show what Christ has done to make himself the beloved, and the friend of every believer.

If men followed the common instincts of nature, and had no bias to turn them from their own interest, he would be the beloved friend of the whole world; for is there a more natural or stronger instinct than the love of pleasure and the hatred of pain? We are subject to innumerable pains, both in body and soul, in this world and in the next; and we have very few enjoyments that can be called real pleasures. Sin was the cause of all our misery. It robbed us of our pleasures, and brought upon us our pains. All was good until sin entered into the world; but when it entered, all evil entered with it; the evil of pain to torment our bodies and bring them down to the grave of death; the evil of guilt to torment our consciences; and the evil of punishment beyond the grave, where soul and body were to receive the wages of sin. From these evils the Lord Jesus came into the world to save his people. And he took our nature, that in it he might bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. The holy law of God accused us of transgression; and he came to answer the demands of the law; which he did by paying it a full and perfect obedience: and this obedience, being the act of a divine and infinite person, had therefore a divine and infinite merit to atone and satisfy for sin. For transgressing the holy law of God we were liable to suffer the threatened pains and penalties. Christ, in our nature, suffered them for us, taking our sins upon him, and bearing the griefs and sorrows and death due to them: for the scripture declares that he was made sin for us, who knew no sin, and that he bare our sins in his own body upon the tree, and that by his stripes we are healed. And he demonstrated that these sufferings were infinitely meritorious when he rose from the dead for our justification. And thus, by his active and passive obedience, he wrought out an all-perfect righteousness for us: and when the Holy Spirit enables us to lay hold of it by the hand of faith, then, being thus applied and made ours, we are not only freed from condemnation and redeemed from the curse of the broken law, and from all the pains and penalties due to the breach of it, but do also receive a right and title to the present graces and to the eternal blessings purchased for us by the obedience and sufferings of our most blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now, let us examine how the foremention instinct operates in the present case. We all love pleasure, and hate pain. This is a universal principle in human nature. And here is a Saviour who promises to deliver us from the present and eternal pains to which sin had subjected us, and to give us of his spiritual and heavenly pleasures here in time and in eternity. He is able to fulfil his promise; for he is the almighty God. He is willing; for, as his power is, so is his love: both are alike infinite. And indeed he is daily fulfilling his promise unto all true believers. But are all men seeking freedom from pain and enjoyment of pleasure at his hands? Do their desires, their affections, move to him with the same natural instinct with which they would fly from sickness and pursue health? Let matter of fact speak. How are men found to act with respect to Jesus Christ, who has present salvation to give them from sin and its effects in his kingdom of grace, and the pleasures of eternal salvation to bestow in his kingdom of glory? Alas! he is despised and rejected of men: although he became a man of sorrows on purpose to carry our sorrows, and acquainted with grief that he might bear our griefs, yet they hide, as it were, their faces from him. The haters of pain choose sin, with all its miseries, rather than accept of the great salvation of our God; and the lovers of pleasure prefer the empty perishing joys of sense

to the solid and everlasting joys of his heaven. In what relates to the soul, they act against that very instinct by which they are invariably guided in what relates to the body. What can be the reason that the same men should act so inconsistently in a case exactly parallel? Sin is the true cause. Sin has destroyed the use of the intellectual faculties in all spiritual matters, and, by cutting off all communion with God, who is the fountain of spiritual life, has left the soul in a state of death, even dead in trespasses and sins. The soul of every natural man is represented in scripture to be as dead to all motions of grace, as dead to God and to the things of God, as a lifeless corpse is to the things of this world. Talk to it of its wants; it feels them not. Recommend to it the Redeemer's sweet graces and divine excellencies; it has no desire to find an interest in them; because it feels not its wants of them. To persons in this state Jesus Christ cannot appear lovely. Notwithstanding all that he has done and suffered to endear himself to sinners, yet, while they see an engaging form and comeliness in sin, they can see no form or comeliness in the Saviour, that they should desire him.

But when one of these persons is awakened from the dead sleep of sin; when his eyes are opened to see himself; when he has a clear view given him of his sinful heart and of his wicked life, and the Spirit of God sets home the conviction of sin upon his conscience, and makes him sensible of his guilt and of his danger; then he will find his want of a Saviour, and will see a peculiar suitableness and fitness in Jesus Christ to supply all his wants. He has every office and every qualification that an awakened sinner could wish. He is just such a Saviour as his heart could desire: and when he begins to see Christ in this light, then he will begin to appear lovely in his eyes. And when, out of the riches of his grace, he begins to supply the sinner's wants, then he will become more lovely: for the more any man knows of Christ, the more he will love him. But when the pardoned sinner tastes the sweetness of redeeming love, and finds joy and peace shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit; when he can say Jesus Christ loved me and gave himself for me; then the beloved Saviour appears altogether lovely; because he sees his interest in the obedience and sufferings of the God-man. He can take up the words of the text, and speak them upon his own experience, which leads me,

Secondly, to consider the believer's knowledge of his interest in Christ before he could say, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend." Here he applies to himself what Christ had done for sinners, as the ground of his love and friendship to him. He had been made to see his wants. The soul, being awakened, had found the burden of sin intolerable, and had gone weary and heavy laden to Jesus Christ; and he had given it rest. The soul, being convinced of sin, felt the torments of a guilty conscience, which nothing could quiet and comfort but the atoning blood of the Lamb of God: and when this was sprinkled upon the conscience, it felt the sovereign healing virtue: for the blood of Jesus quenched the hell within, and brought down heaven into the soul. The Holy Spirit bore his inward witness that this was the work of God; and he continued the heavenly joy of his first testimony by enabling the believer to show the reality of the inward work by the outward evidence of his life and conversation, by bringing forth the rich and ripe fruits of the Spirit to the glory of God. And thus he had good evidence of his being interested in the obedience and atonement, in the righteousness and sanctifying grace of Jesus Christ, and lived in sure and certain hope of inheriting through him immortality and endless glory.

The sinner must experience these things before he can say of the Redeemer, "This is my beloved and my friend." He must find in himself these proofs of Christ's love and friendship which he was to show to sinners. He had wisdom and pardon, righteousness and holiness, and eternal redemption to give them: but my gratitude and love cannot arise from his having them to give to sinners in general, but to me in particular. I must have reason to call them mine: he must enable me to apply and to appropriate them to myself before I can see his loveliness in giving them; because it is not what he does to others, but what he does to my soul, that makes him my beloved and my friend. And hence came the wise remark, which was so often made by our first reformers, "That an un-

applied Christ is no Christ." All that he has done and suffered for sinners must be applied to me before I can call him mine. He is the wisdom and the light of his people: but how can he appear to me altogether lovely in this character if I am still in ignorance and darkness? How can I love him for being made unto me wisdom until he has enlightened me with saving truth? He has pardon to give to the greatest sinners: but if it be never made out to me, I can have none of the comforts of it: and how, then, can I love him for being the pardoner of sin "unless I feel my conscience at peace with God, through the remission of my sin," as our church expresses it, in the third part of the homily for Rogation week? He has the robe of perfect righteousness to bestow: but if I know nothing of my being clothed with it, the law will still condemn, and my conscience will be full of guilt and horror: and how then is it possible for me to love him for being the righteousness of the saints if I never find joy and peace in believing that his righteousness is imputed unto me for my justification? He is the believer's holiness and sanctification; but how is he mine while I find myself enslaved to sin and kept under its dominion? How can I love Christ for being the sanctification of his people while I am under the absolute power of sin? Christ is also made unto the believer redemption: but if I know nothing of my having received redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, how can I lift up my head with joy when the almighty Judge is coming in the clouds, as knowing that my redemption then draweth nigh? In like manner all Christ's gifts and graces are matter of joy to the pardoned sinner, so far as he receives them, and knows by faith his interest in them: without this knowledge, of what benefit can they be, or what comfort can they administer to any person? For if you be sick, and have an excellent remedy that would cure you, yet it can do you no service unless you take it. Suppose you are perishing of hunger and thirst; setting meat and drink before you will not save your life unless you use them. If you are naked and like to be frozen to death, will those clothes warm you, and save your life, which you never put on? So Christ is the medicine of the sin-sick soul: but if Christ's virtue be not applied to heal, if the medicine be not taken, how can it work a cure? So he is the bread of life: but unless he be taken, and verily and indeed received, as spiritual food, how can he support the life of God in the soul of man? So Christ is the clothing of his people: but how can he be their clothing if they never put him on? How can they appear before God in spotless purity if they have never put on Christ Jesus the Lord? Surely, then, there is great judgment in that wise saying, which our reformers had so often in their mouths, "An unapplied Christ is no Christ"—he is no Christ to that sinner to whom he is not applied, and therefore he is not his beloved nor his friend.

From hence appears the manner and kind of knowledge on which the believer grounded the words of the text. He was able to apply to himself all that Christ had done and suffered for sinners. He knew it experimentally. He had the comforts of it in his own heart; and, seeing clearly his interest in Christ, he therefore saw him altogether lovely.

But perhaps some one may ask, Can I apply the merits of Christ's obedience and sufferings so clearly and safely to myself, that I may be sure I am not deluded? This is a very important inquiry, which I shall pursue under my third head, wherein I was to consider what certainty I can have of Christ's being my beloved and my friend. The scripture promises us full and complete evidence; and it is the office of faith to enable us to rest upon it. Our certainty arises from our faith, and from what faith shows us of our own particular interest in God's promises. The word of promise and the Holy Spirit applying the word must go together: for the word is but a dead letter unless the Holy Spirit animate and quicken it, by working faith in the heart, to apply it savingly. Faith is a divine grace, given us by the Spirit of God on purpose to convince us of our interest in Jesus Christ, and to enable us to apply the promises to ourselves: for it is expressly said to be "the gift of God," and to be wrought in us by "the operation of God." By his almighty operation he works in my heart a clear conviction of my being accepted at the bar of justice as just and righteous, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When the Holy Spirit has given the believer this

clear conviction, then he has divine authority, both from the word of truth and the Spirit of power, to call the Saviour his beloved and his friend. The Holy Spirit must enable him to do this: "for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost:" and therefore without the Holy Ghost, how can any man say that Jesus is my Lord? Indeed he will be so far from saying it, that he will question whether it can be said with certainty. The natural man, who has not the divine grace of faith, is always reasoning against it, and concludes with himself that it is altogether presumption. He cannot see how it works full assurance in the mind. And how should he? As he is a stranger to the thing, how should he judge of the nature of the evidence which it gives? He is a more improper judge than a blind man is of colours: for until he receive faith from God as his gift, and by the operation of God as the work of his Spirit, he can form no idea of the nature of the certainty which it produces in the mind. The scripture teaches him that faith is the evidence of things not seen, even such evidence as gives them a present substance and reality; so that the whole man and every faculty of soul and body rest upon the certainty of them with full assurance, and direct every word and work towards the attainment of them; but the natural man receiveth not these things. How the eye of faith should be open, to see what is to the natural man invisible, seems to him a great mystery. And so it will be until God open his eyes. He only can do it; yea, he only can convince him that he is now blind. Oh that the enlightening Spirit may open the eyes of every person here present who has no certainty of his interest in Christ, that he may not only be convinced such a thing is to be attained, but may also be led to seek until he find all the comforts of it! Which comforts I proposed, in the fourth place, to consider.

The comforts which I here speak of are realities, promised in God's infallible word, bestowed by his Spirit and received by faith. They no more depend upon fancy and imagination than the objects do which we see with our eyes and handle with our hands. The soul has as true a perception of them as the bodily senses can have of any solid substance. And you may as well say we are deluded at our common meals, when we are eating or drinking, or when we are hearing a fine piece of music, as suppose righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost to be a delusion. Thank God the believer knows, and is happy in knowing, the reality of those things. When he can say with the apostle, Jesus Christ loved me, and gave himself for me; and with the faithful in the text, he is my beloved, and he is my friend; then he has the present possession of the graces and blessings purchased by the Redeemer's obedience and sufferings, and the eternal possession is secured to him under the seal of two infallible witnesses; *viz.* the word and the Spirit of God. The comforts which he enjoys in this state can no more be described than the joys of heaven. He has a love which passeth knowledge, a peace which surpasseth all understanding, a joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. In one word, the Comforter is his. The eternal Spirit, whose name, whose office, whose glory, it is to be the comforter of God's people, is his. He is the applier of all comfort, and he dwells in the heart to apply it. What comfort, then, can be wanting? He is the sinner's comforter: for he comes to give him faith, and to assure him of his pardon and acceptance. He is the believer's comforter in all times and states, strengthening and establishing him, shedding abroad in his heart that love which makes prosperity safe and adversity sweet, and which renders even the way of the commandments delightful. And this divine comforter is the dearest pledge of our Lord's love; "for he shall take of mine," says the blessed Jesus, "and shall show it unto you," even to all his disciples and followers, to the end of the world. He shall take of my graces and blessings, and shall show them unto you, shall manifest them and your interest in them to your hearts. I will send him for this purpose. In this one gift he sent you all; because he sent you that Spirit who lets you know your interest in all. Knowing this, you are happy, yea, happier than tongue of men or angels can describe. Your loftiest descriptions fall short of the happiness which the Lord Jesus gives by his Spirit in the present life: and they who taste of it find that he is altogether lovely, and are assured that he is their beloved and their friend. May the God of all mercy and conso-

lation assure every one of you of your interest in the Redeemer's friendship, that you may receive many happy proofs of it in time and in eternity!

And now let us look into ourselves, and apply what has been said to our own hearts. You have heard what the Lord Jesus did and suffered to make himself the beloved and the friend of all believers, and what knowledge he gives them of their interest in his obedience and sufferings; nay what certainty they have by faith of their interest in him, from whence flows a continual source of pure and spiritual comfort. Since these things are so, the matter is now brought to a point; and that is—Can you, my brethren, take up the words of the text, and upon the clear evidence of your own experience declare, Jesus Christ is my beloved and my friend—He is mine, and I am his—His good Spirit bears testimony of it in my heart—The word of God bears testimony of it in my life: for I am become a new creature, and live a new life in Christ Jesus. If you can say this with truth, then you are happy. But if you cannot, you want the true foundation of gospel comfort, which is laid in Christ Jesus, and in the evidence I have of my interest in him.

But perhaps some of you may think that there is no knowing for certain, and others may think it presumption for a man to declare, that he knows so much of the state of his soul as to be certain that Christ is his beloved and his friend. Hear what the scripture says: "Jesus Christ," says the blessed apostle Paul, "loved me, and gave himself for me." Certainly this was not presumption in Paul, nor yet in the beloved John, when he said, "The Son of God hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." He did not think it any presumption to declare that he was in Christ—rooted and built up in him.

But these apostles, some will say, were inspired: they knew this by inspiration: but is it the common privilege of all believers to know it? It is. Every true believer knows that Christ Jesus is his Saviour and his God. Faith manifests it to him; and faith is wrought in him by the operation of the Holy Spirit for this very purpose. So says our church, in the third part of the homily of salvation: "The true faith is a sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Christ my sins be forgiven, and I am reconciled to the favour of God, and am partaker of the kingdom of heaven by Christ." And in the third part of the homily for Rogation week, our church says, "that a man may feel his conscience at peace with God through remission of his sin." So say the living members of our church. They can use her words without presumption, and declare that they have a sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Christ, their sins are forgiven, and they are reconciled to the favour of God, and are partakers of the kingdom of heaven by Christ, and that they feel their conscience at peace with God, through remission of their sin. What can you object to these authorities? The Liturgy will not suffer any member of our church to make the least objection: for, in the prayer after the communion service, we are taught, "That God does assure them, who have duly received these holy mysteries, of his favour and goodness towards them; nay more, assures them that they are very members incorporate into the mystical body of his Son, and also assures them that they are heirs through the hope of his everlasting kingdom." Here our church plainly teaches that a believer may know Christ to be his beloved and his friend: for he may have assurance of God's favour and goodness towards him—the assurance of his being united to Christ, and incorporated into his mystical body—and the assurance of his being an heir of Christ's everlasting kingdom. The warmest contenders for the assurance of faith could not have expressed their opinion in stronger terms than our church uses in this prayer. And now, my brethren of the church of England, what do you think of these authorities? Are they not clear and decisive? And will you not be determined by them? Here you have the word of God, and the Spirit of God, and the people of God, with one voice declaring that a man not only may know, but that it is the very office and work of saving faith to let him know, and to assure him of, the favour and goodness of God towards him, and that he is a member of Christ, and an heir of glory. Do not then, my brethren, deny a fact so well attested. Your denial of it will only

prove your want of true saving faith: and it is a very strong proof to others. Would to God you saw your want of it yourselves! At present you dispute against the certainty which faith gives, because you have not received it, nor have any desire for it. Is not this the case? This shows your want of that faith, which is the operation of God. When faith is the work of his grace, it brings absolute certainty. According to the apostle, it gives substance to the things hoped for, and evidence to the things not seen. If you have not this kind of faith, do not dispute against it, lest you should be found disputing against God. Rather beg of God to give it you. Ask him, if it be the privilege of believers to know Jesus Christ to be your beloved and your friend, to give you this knowledge. Ask it for the sake of your present and eternal peace. If you desire a calm, serene conscience, free from the guilt of sin, and saved from the power and dominion of it, beg you may know your interest in the Lord Jesus: for until you know it, you cannot live upon the promises nor enjoy the comforts of the gospel. You cannot live upon the promises but by faith—by that faith which makes the things hoped for substantially present, and realizes the things not seen, and thus enjoys the comforts of the gospel. But as you have not this faith, you live without Christ in the world: and if you should come to die without any hope in him, oh! think what your condition would then be! All your sins would stand unatoned against you. Conscience would accuse. The broken law would condemn you. Justice must give you your due: and what but the wages of sin! even eternal destruction of soul and body! Are not these very interesting and alarming considerations? I pray God to give them their proper weight and influence upon your minds. May he convince you of your want of faith, and stir you up to seek it as the free gift, and as the work and operation of the almighty Spirit. Thus seek, and you shall find. Continue seeking with humility in the ways of the ordinances, and you will be brought to the knowledge of a loving Saviour, who will give you many reasons to call him your beloved and your friend.

If then you are convinced of sin, and see your guilt and your danger, what should hinder you from accepting the blessings of Christ's love? Is it the sense of your unworthiness? He is the Saviour of the unworthy. Are you afraid he will not receive you, because you are great sinners? He came to save the greatest. But you have been high and long in rebellion against him. Then you stand in greater need of pardon. Make more haste to obtain it, and apply more earnestly for it. But you find so much weakness and backwardness in yourself, that you are at a loss how to take one step. This is another motive for applying to him. Read, for your encouragement, that sweet scripture, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Go, then, to him such as you are: go as poor lost sinners: for such he came to seek and to save. He is the beloved Saviour and friend of sinners. His love to them brought him down from heaven—carried him through a blaspheming persecuting world—nailed him to the cross—and laid him in the grave. Can he want love for sinners, who did so much, who bled to death for them? What can he withhold from them, who is now their advocate, pleading their cause, and interceding for them at the bar of justice? Oh, sinner, consider what a blessing it is to have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is willing and able to supply all thy wants. Make them known to him. Open thy heart before him, and acknowledge thy great and numerous sins. Confess them, and they will be no bar to his love and friendship. He will do honour to his free grace by making thee out a full pardon. The Holy Spirit will be sent to bear his testimony of it in thy heart: he will give thee love and joy in believing: he will clothe thee with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ: he will enrich thy justified soul with his sanctifying graces, mortifying sin in thee, and making thee alive to God; and he will make thee happy in having the most high God and Saviour for thy beloved and thy friend here in time and in eternity.

All this, and more than this, the Lord Jesus will do for every unpardoned sinner who will apply to him. No tongue can relate the greatness and number of the graces and blessings which he has to give to sinners. Faith has a present taste of them, and hope now enjoys them; and, though imperfectly, yet no

description can come up to what the believer feels. And who, then, is able to describe how great they will be when faith and hope shall cease, and the soul shall be filled with the love of God? Oh what happiness, what a heaven will it be to see our Saviour in the brightness of divine glory! to behold him face to face—and then to be able to say of him whom all the host of heaven worship—of the eternal and almighty God whom all the redeemed adore—This is my beloved, and this is my friend! That will be joy unspeakable. Oh, how lovely, how altogether lovely, will this blessed God then appear in the eyes of sinners, when his love and friendship shall have brought them safe to the enjoyment of his eternal glory! How will they then admire and praise the wonders of his redeeming love! What subject of joy, and gratitude, and thanks will their consideration of his free grace afford them, which raised them from the lowest state of wretchedness to the highest happiness of his heaven! Certainly, this blessedness surpasseth all understanding. No tongue can utter, or heart conceive, how great it is. And yet, sinner, all this may be thine. The Lord Jesus promises it freely. Come, then, and accept of it. Unless thou thinkest thy sins can make thee happier than God can, return to them no more. Now close in with the invitation that is made thee. Take Jesus for thy God. Go this day, this hour, to the throne of his grace. Commit thyself into his hands, sinful as thou art, and he will send his good Spirit into thy heart, to give thee present comforts of salvation, and to prepare thee for the eternal salvation of thy Lord and thy God.

And now, what wait we for, O thou most blessed God and most loving Saviour! but that we may all experience the truth of this scripture. Write it, Lord Jesus, in all our hearts. Send us away with warm impressions of it upon our minds. Oh that every soul here present had reason to say, Yea, he is altogether lovely—Whatever is lovely in heaven and earth meets in the incarnate God; and this incarnate God is my beloved and this is my friend. May the grace of the eternal Three, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, manifest to your souls the perfect loveliness of Jesus Christ, and keep him your beloved and your friend in time, until you see him face to face in his eternal glory. *Amen* and *Amen*

DISCOURSE IX.

CHAP. vi. ver. 1.

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

IN the beginning of the fifth chapter, we find the believer fallen into a spiritual slumber. After much sweet communion with Christ, and long walking in the light of his countenance, he grew negligent. While the bridegroom tarried, he slumbered and slept. He left off stirring up the gift of God that was in him, and ceased to be watchful and to strengthen the things which remain. And thus he forgot the rule laid down for the conduct of believers—"Let us not sleep as others do; but let us watch and be sober."

Christ is represented as coming to the soul sleeping in this security; but it was not a total, universal sleep, like the dead sleep of sin: for he found the heart awake, and capable of distinguishing it to be his voice that knocked at the door of the heart for admittance, and said, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for I have been waiting till my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." The soul, willing to enjoy its indolent slumber, excuses itself from rising to let him in. Upon which he withdrew himself, and hid his face. He took away the sensible feeling of his comforts, but at the same time left something in the heart which made it sensible of its past unkindness, and put it upon endeavouring earnestly to recover its former communion and sweet fellowship with Christ. The soul is restless until they be recovered—goes out to seek for Christ, but cannot find him—calls, but he gives no answer—meets with reproach and persecution in the search, and yet gives it

not over—turns to the daughters of Jerusalem, the outward members of the church, and charges them, if they found her beloved, to tell him that she was sick of love; she had enjoyed the sweetness of his presence, and now so distinctly discerned his absence as to be sick and in pain for the return of his love.

Instead of answering directly, they inquire, "What is thy beloved, more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou so chargest us?" This question gave occasion to the believer to describe his beloved. He draws a character of Christ, and paints his excellencies under the most sublime images nature could afford; but finds all too mean to express Christ's worth, and his value for it. He therefore sums it up in these words: "Yea, he is altogether lovely—This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."—Although he has withdrawn himself, yet still he is altogether lovely in my eyes: for I know that I am interested in him; and this gives a new grace to his every excellency. Still he is my beloved, and I am his; still he is my friend, and I am his. Although he has for a time hid his face from me, yet I believe that, ere long, I shall again walk in the light of his countenance. This enlivened description of Christ fired the daughters of Jerusalem. They now saw there was something more in this beloved than in another beloved; and they had good desires stirred up in their hearts—earnest and fervent desires—to share in his love, and to partake of his graces and blessings: for thus they now reply, in a very different temper from what they showed before: "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee." May the Holy Spirit, by his gracious influence, dispose every one of us to seek, as they did, until we find an interest in the blessed Jesus. And to this end may he accompany with his grace and blessing what shall now be offered,

First, Concerning the character of the persons who speak the words of the text.

Secondly, Concerning the subject-matter of their speech. And

Thirdly, Concerning the use we are to make of it.

And first, The persons who speak in the text are called "The daughters of Jerusalem." Jerusalem is the church. The scripture applies the word both to the congregation of the faithful here below, and also to the heavenly Jerusalem that is above. The daughters of the church are its members, who are bred and educated in it. They lived in her communion, and partook of her ordinances. And yet they seem to have had no experience of that sweet and spiritual union which the believer enjoyed with his beloved Saviour: for they inquire what he saw in Christ more than in any other beloved, and, being made acquainted with his graces and excellencies, then they desire to seek him along with the believer. These circumstances plainly prove that they were not intimately and vitally united to Christ by faith. They were not joined to him as the head of the mystical body, nor, as his living members, were they drawing nourishment and strength from him for the support and carrying on their spiritual life. They were not as living branches grafted into the true vine, and bearing much fruit by their union with him; but they contented themselves with living within the pale of the visible church, and thought themselves safe and happy in church membership. They were the children of Abraham, admitted into the covenant on the eighth day, lived among God's chosen people, who had the law and promises, and they were strict in the observance of the instituted rites and ceremonies. Easy and secure in this state, none of them inquired—All these have I kept: what lack I yet? One thing thou lackest—spiritual communion with Christ—without which church privileges and outward ordinances do not answer the end of their appointment. It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. The flesh, the outward service, profiteth nothing unless the quickening Spirit go along with it; and the quickening Spirit has not gone along with it until he has begun to draw the soul to Christ, and to unite it to him by faith.

If we look among the members of our church, we shall find too many followers of these daughters of Jerusalem. We have some who, because they live in the communion of a sound apostolic church, therefore think themselves safe, while their lives give open scandal and offence to all good men. Their opinion about

good mother church is very much like the opinion of the Papists, who think the living in the church can save them, although they live in their sins. And we have others who make the greatest boast of their love to our church, and speak of her in the highest terms, who are only outward members of her communion. They will contend with all their might for the purity of her rites and ceremonies, and will draw their swords to defend the divine institution of episcopacy, and to cut off from all communion with Christ those vile schismatics who will not live in the communion of the church of England; while they have not a word to say for the necessity of being united to the head of the catholic church, and of being joined to him by living faith. Nay, perhaps, when they hear that, unless the Holy Spirit be the bond on Christ's part, uniting him to the believer, and faith on his part, uniting him to Christ, it will be of very little consequence in what outward communion a man lives: when they hear this, it is too hard a saying; they cannot bear it. They think that a sound church, with a good liturgy, scripture articles and homilies, and a regular discipline, are the main things. Doubtless they are good things. God forbid our church should be without them; and God forbid any member of our church should rest in them; for in this communion, excellent as it is, a man believing it to be excellent may yet live without the grace of Christ, and perish from glory for ever. The church is not a Saviour. We Protestants have one Saviour, even Christ Jesus our Lord. The Papists indeed make a Saviour of the church, and a far greater Saviour than Christ: for the holy mother church can save a man who dies in his sins unrepented of, which Christ has nowhere in scripture promised to do. And our high churchmen, in the heat of their party zeal, speak and act in the very spirit of Popery. By laying so much stress, nay, laying all the stress, as some of them do, upon outward communion, they omit the weightier matter of inward communion with the head of the church, without which, of whatever reformed church or Protestant congregation a man be a member, he is no member of the true church of Christ. He has not the spirit of Christ uniting him to the head of the mystical body; and without the spirit of Christ he is none of his. Rest not, then, I beseech you, my brethren, in outward membership, to this or that communion. Do not place your religion in externals. You may live in the best communion upon earth, and such indeed I take the church of England to be, and yet you may be out of Christ's kingdom. Outward things, of themselves, will not avail: for the kingdom of God does not consist in meat and drink, nor in any thing external, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. His kingdom is a spiritual thing. It is formed within us in the heart. There Christ must rule and govern. Seek then to have his kingdom set up within you by an inward work of his grace. Beg of God to show you your want of it. And when it shall please him to convince you that no outward things can avail, not even his own institutions, unless his quickening Spirit be in them, then he will bring you into a proper frame and temper of mind to join with the daughters of Jerusalem in the text in seeking the knowledge of your interest in Christ; which is the second particular to be considered.

The believer had described the excellencies and perfections of his beloved Jesus, and had spoken feelingly of his own interest in them. The description stirred up the daughters of Jerusalem, who wondered, at first, what he saw in his Jesus to be so enamoured with him, to desire that they might have the same happy experience. And they who could inquire before what there was in him more than in another beloved, now ask, "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?" Christ had before called her the fairest among women. She had no beauty in herself. Defiled and deformed with natural and actual guilt, she was cast out to the loathing of her person. He that is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity could not see any thing in her but ugliness and sinful deformity: and yet the love of the Lord Jesus has cleansed her from every spot and stain of sin. In the 16th chapter of Ezekiel we have a sweet description of his free grace and love. "When I passed by thee," says he, "and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live."—And after describing the several steps which he took to raise her up, to ornament her, and

to ennoble her, he adds—"Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." He clothed her with the unspotted robe of his own righteousness, and made her perfect through his comeliness which he put upon her. All our comeliness now consists in what Christ puts upon us, and in what he works in us. While man was innocent, he wanted no clothing; but when he lost the image of God, then shame and sin made clothing necessary. The sinful body is forced to go to the creatures to borrow a covering from them; and the soul has no covering but what comes from the Head of the church. The moon has no light but what she receives from the sun. The spouse of Christ shines in the beams of her husband. Covered and ornamented with his righteousness, and enriched with the graces of his Spirit, she is the fairest among women; fair in the sight of an infinitely holy God, in the eye of the perfect law she appears to be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and without blemish. In this amiable light she now appears to the daughters of Jerusalem. They see and acknowledge her perfect beauty, and earnestly desire to partake of her Lord's love. Whither, say they, is thy beloved, whose love was able to clothe thee with this immaculate robe of righteousness, and whose spirit has enriched thee with so many divine graces, whither is he gone? They knew he had withdrawn himself from the believer; but it is plain, from this question, that they did not think Christ had quite forsaken him; they supposed he still knew Christ, and was able to inform them whither he was gone. The words immediately following the text show that he was acquainted where Christ then vouchsafed his presence, though he had hid his face from him: "My beloved," says he, "is gone down into his garden." He is still in the garden of his church. There he was to be found. He was still present by his Spirit in the ordinances; and in them he was determined to wait until he found his beloved. Christ had taken away the light of his countenance, not only to chastise his former sleepy security, and to make him more earnest in seeking his Lord, and to make him more thankful when he should find him, but also to render him the means, as it here proved, of stirring up others to seek for a clear knowledge of Christ and the experience of his love. "Whither is thy beloved gone?" say they; "whither is thy beloved turned aside?"—not wholly departed, but only turned aside, "tell us, that we may seek him with thee." How wonderfully does grace appear to work by the growth of these good desires in the daughters of Jerusalem! And how ready should we be to speak a word for Christ, since such may be the happy effects! How industrious ought we to be to seek occasions! how careful to neglect none! As we know not which word is to prosper, either this or that, let us take every opportunity of saying something for Christ. Let us inform men what he is, and what we know of him; and who can tell but a very imperfect, yet well-meant description may receive a blessing. Have we not great encouragement in the morning to sow our seed, and in the evening not to withhold our hand from the success mentioned in the text? When the daughters of Jerusalem heard the believer enlarge upon the excellencies of Christ, and set forth his own share and interest in them, and saw that no discouragements could cool the ardour of his love, they were hereby stirred up; these were the means, under God, of putting them upon desiring a nearer and more close acquaintance with Christ. They knew him before by profession; but now they wanted the possession of him. They wanted to know Christ to be theirs. At first, they saw no form nor comeliness in him, that they should desire him. But now the desires of their hearts are after him. They see their want of him; they are convinced of his all-sufficiency to supply their wants; they believe he is able, and they hope he is willing; they neither doubt of his power or of his love to save, and therefore they resolve to seek him until they have experienced the truth of the character which they had heard of him, and can call him their beloved and their friend.

Considering the words in this light, they hold out to us one plain lesson. When the daughters of Jerusalem heard of the beauties and excellencies of God the Saviour, it wrought upon their hearts, and kindled fervent and earnest desires to know their interest in him. Still God works in the same manner. When Christ is set forth in his divine graces and attributes and offices, the Holy

Spirit thereby stirs up desires in the hearts of sinners to seek Christ and his salvation, and he also excites holy affections in believers to follow Christ more closely. Has he, my brethren, wrought thus in any of your hearts? How have you been affected with these discourses upon the loveliness and perfections of Jesus Christ? Have they made any good impression upon you? Have you had stronger desires after Christ? and have you seen him more lovely than you ever did before? These effects ought to have followed: for his "name is as ointment poured forth;" the preaching of his name is like opening a box of the richest perfume: it diffuses its fragrancy all around; so that the house is filled with the grateful odour of the ointment. Did you perceive none of it poured forth? none of this unction from the holy one descending upon you this day? Did you find no sweet savour of grace working in your hearts while I was attempting to draw a short character of the loveliness of Jesus? Did he appear to you altogether lovely, as man, as God, as God-man united in one Saviour? and was it the prayer of your soul that you might find him your beloved and your friend? If the Holy Spirit accompanied the word, these effects have followed: if they have, give the glory to God, and be thankful; and if they have not, oh that he may now enable me to speak a word to your consciences under my third and last head; which was to make a proper use and application of what has been said.

The believer, though under spiritual desertion, could see nothing worth seeking after but his beloved Saviour. He seeks him though he cannot find; calls, though he has no answer; continues seeking and calling, though he meets with disgrace and persecution. The pleasing remembrance of their love would not suffer him to rest until it was renewed. His love grew with seeking. Opposition made it burn the brighter. He went on, nothing discouraged, until he found the daughters of Jerusalem, and made them acquainted with his case. They ask what he found in this Jesus that he was so distressed at his withdrawing himself from him. This gave him occasion to draw the character of his beloved; which he does in a very enlivened description, setting forth, in the most beautiful colours, what he was in himself, and what he was to him, the perfect loveliness of Christ, and his interest in it. Upon this the daughters of Jerusalem take fire. They become also in love with Christ, and desire to share in those perfections, the account of which had touched their hearts and inflamed their affection.

Now, if the Spirit of God be moving in your hearts, this is, my brethren, the case with you. You are convinced of your own spiritual wants, and of Christ's being an all-sufficient and a loving Saviour; and while I have been describing him, you have sent up many a wish to heaven, praying him to reveal himself to you, and to manifest his love to your soul. This is always the consequence of preaching Christ Jesus the Lord, when God effectually works with the word preached. When the Holy Spirit accompanies it with his divine grace, it is then the power of God unto salvation. But,

If this has not been the effect, if you have had no desires awakened in your minds after Christ, consider, I beseech you, what a state of guilt and danger you are in. Jesus Christ has all the excellencies of heaven and earth—every thing that ought to gain your esteem in his human nature—every thing that can demand your love in his divine nature—and, as God-man united in one Saviour, he has every grace and every blessing to give that can make you happy in time and in eternity. And yet, though he has every thing valuable that can win the understanding, though he has every thing desirable that can gain the will, though he has every thing lovely that can influence the heart and the affections, you can hear of him without any emotion. You see no form nor comeliness in him that you should desire him. Without an interest in him you must be miserable for ever. He alone can save you from the just punishment due to your sins; and yet, your hopes and fears, your own interest, your love of pleasure and hatred of pain, cannot prevail with you to love and esteem the God of our salvation. What is the reason of this? Why are all the faculties of the soul thus strongly biassed against their own interest? Propose to them any sensual pleasure, they eagerly desire and ardently pursue it; and with the same propensity they fly from sensual pain. But in matters relating to the soul, they act directly contrary

Jesus Christ, being the Saviour of the world, has every spiritual pleasure to give, and yet they neither eagerly desire nor ardently pursue it. Without an interest in him, body and soul will be in everlasting pain; and yet they do not fly to him, that they may avoid it. Whence is it that men act thus absurdly, thus unnaturally? The scripture gives this reason. Sin has corrupted all the faculties of soul and body, and has got dominion over them. It has blinded the understanding, which is dark, yea darkness itself, the apostle says, not only without the actual knowledge of God and of the things of God, but also without the potential knowledge of them: "for the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." From whence we learn his actual want of knowledge in the things of God. But lest some should ascribe this to his neglect of them, or to his not being acquainted with metaphysics or moral reasoning, the apostle adds, "neither can he know them," let him study them ever so much: from hence we learn his want of power to know them; and this is the reason: "because they are spiritually discerned:"—an evident proof that the faculties of the natural man are as much under the power of sin, as a dead corpse is under the power of death. In all spiritual matters he is like a dead man, without any spiritual discernment. He cannot turn his mind to think, his will to desire, or his affections to love them. Sin has absolute dominion over him, and forces him to serve it with all the powers of soul and body, even to their own destruction. In this state, dreadful as it is, you are at present. If the desires of your heart be not after Christ; if you do not at this time wish from your souls that you may have an interest in the loveliness and excellencies of Christ, and may know him to be your Saviour and your God; then be assured that you are still under the power of sin: it has entirely blinded you: and I should be an enemy to my blessed master, and an enemy to your happiness, if I did not speak to you freely and openly, and warn you of your danger. Out of love to your souls I cannot be silent; and, whether you will hear or whether you will forbear, I must deliver my own soul.

I suppose, my brethren, you profess yourselves Christians, and you believe that Jesus Christ is a perfect and complete Saviour; and you believe, further, that you shall, some time or other, stand in need of his salvation; but you have no desire to experience it at present. You do not want present salvation from sin: you cannot but wish to be freed from the guilt and punishment of it: but then you have no wishes to be freed from its dominion. Is it not evident therefore that it still has dominion over you? and being so, you are children of God's wrath, under the curses of his holy law: sentenced by it, and condemned to everlasting torments, death will soon come, and inflict the curses of the law upon you, even the most terrible and dreadful of them. How awful and striking are these words: who but a man dead in sin could stand out against the force of them! "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." You are here put under the heaviest and bitterest of divine curses, not only if you hate or oppose Jesus Christ, but also if you do not love him. Oh consider, then, and weigh this scripture carefully, if you have not some love for the Lord Jesus, and are not seeking to love him more. I leave it upon your minds (and may God write it upon all your hearts), that you may fly from this Anathema and Maran-atha to the arms of that loving Saviour, who alone can deliver you from it. Flee, then, from sin. Flee, then, from Satan. Flee, from all the enemies of your souls to this loving God, who is almighty to save. And to those who are flying to him for salvation, and whose hearts have been stirred up to seek him along with these daughters of Jerusalem, I make my second practical remark.

My brethren, you have great reason to be thankful for these first motions of grace. God has begun to draw you to himself: follow and run after him. Seek him while he may be found. And, for your encouragement, remember how many sweet promises God has made in scripture to them that seek him: "Those that seek me early, says wisdom, shall find me." Prov. viii. 17. Christ, who is made unto us wisdom, here declares that he will be found of them that seek him. And again he says, "Seek, and ye shall find: for every one that seeketh, findeth." These are the words of the God of truth; and they shall stand

last for ever and ever. His almighty power will, against all opposition, fulfill his promises. And his faithful people find them fulfilled. They have the comfortable experience of them. One of his people, a man after his own heart, has declared, "Thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee." No, never, at no time has he disappointed them. If they sought happiness in him, they infallibly found it. And this is the experience of all God's people. They can take up the prophet's words, and with one voice declare, "Thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee." Here is comfort for them that seek the Lord Jesus.

How happy would worldly men think themselves, if they were upon this footing! if they were sure of finding what they seek! Let them not rise up in judgment against you, my brethren, and condemn you for not seeking what you could not but have found if you had sought aright; Christ is to be found in his own ordinances. He is to be met with, not in the wilderness of the world, but in the inclosed garden of the church. Thither he still comesd own, and manifests himself to them that seek him. In the assemblies of his people he will be made known by animating and quickening the word, and by rendering iteffectual to awaken sinners from the dead sleep of sin, to encourage seekers to go on until they find, and to build up and strengthen them that have found. He will prove himself to be the God who heareth prayer, by hearing and answering their petitions for themselves, and their supplications for all men. He will make himself known to them by breaking of bread, and by feeding and strengthening their souls with his body and blood at his own table. He still comes down with his gracious presence into these ordinances, and animates and enlivens them. We are his witnesses: for we find his good Spirit in them. Oh continue, then, seeking, and continue in the ways of his own appointing; and when it will be most for his glory, and for your comfort and salvation, you have his word of promise, "you shall find." And sooner shall heaven and earth pass away than the least tittle of any of his promises shall fail; "Seek, and ye shall find." And to them who have found, I have a word of exhortation, in the third and last place.

My Christian brethren! since you know Christ to be altogether lovely, and to be your beloved and your friend, pray daily for more and more of his love. Beseech the Holy Spirit to shed it abroad abundantly in your hearts, that you may honour him more in your lives, and praise him more with your lips. How meanly soever men may think of him, be not ye ashamed to own what he has done for your souls. Publish his praises. Proclaim to all about you what a loving Saviour you have found. If you, after what you have experienced, were silent, surely the very stones will cry out. Speak out, then, and tell of his matchless excellencies and infinite perfections, and try to stir up others to seek. Press them to leave sin, and to come to him; for nothing but sin can keep them from him. Persuade them to leave the poor unsatisfying joys of sin, and to seek his heavenly pleasures. Among your acquaintance and friends, in your family, in all companies, speak a word for your dear Saviour. He sometimes blesses a well-meant speech, if it be neither learned nor elegant. But if it should not be a blessing to others, yet it will certainly be one to yourself: for he hath promised —them that honour me, I will honour.

The scope and design of what I have said was to persuade you all to seek he knowledge of your interest in Christ's love, as the only means of making you happy. Knowing your interest in him is the ground of your love: for if you had no knowledge or experience of his love, how could you love him because he first loved you? Your love is only the reflex act of his love. And you must know that he loves you before you can be truly happy; and you must be happy in him before you can have any motive to sing his praises from your heart. It is the blessed employment of the faithful upon earth, and of the glorified saints in heaven, to give honour and blessing and praise to the Lamb that was slain. and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood. Can you, my brethren, join your hearts and voices with theirs? Are you able to praise the Lord for his goodness, and to declare the wonders that he hath done for your soul? to be telling of his salvation from day to day, every day, and all the day? If you have not reason enough to be always giving of thanks, you may be assured you are not a real member of the church of Christ. If you were, you

would find the truth of this scripture: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be always praising thee." This is the sweet employment of those who dwell in the house of God, in the church here below. It is meet, right, and their bounden duty, that they should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty everlasting God. It is their duty, and they reckon it their privilege; and sorry they are when they either find themselves interrupted by the necessary affairs of this life, or, through coldness of their affections, are indisposed for the delightful exercise of thanksgiving. But, thanks be to God, who will soon deliver us from both these hindrances! Ere long, we shall join the glorified spirits who are now standing round the throne, singing the praises of God and the Lamb. This is their constant and happy employment: and his infinite, adorable perfections will find them fresh matter of praise to all eternity. Suppose any of you were to go out of the world in love with sin, and void of the love of Christ, you could not join them, nor would it be any pleasure to you to hear them ascribe blessing and honour and glory and power to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. This is the felicity of an innumerable company of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect: but it could be none to you; because your heart was not fitted for it. If you believe this, and, if God's word be true, you cannot deny it; then ask yourselves, Would you choose to die unfit for the joys of heaven? Surely you would not. Why, then, do you live unfit for them? If ever you relish them, you must begin to taste their sweetness here. In this life the praises of Christ must be your delight if they ever be in the next. Weigh these motives, and give them the attention which they deserve. Consider them under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Pray for his grace. And may he dispose you to seek the knowledge of your interest in Christ, and enable you to wait until his love be shed abroad in your hearts: and then you will have reason to rejoice in your redeeming God in time and in eternity. And that this may be your happy experience, let us pray for it! May he who sitteth upon the throne hear and answer!

Look down with mercy, O thou almighty and loving Saviour, upon this whole congregation. All hearts are open, all desires known, and no secrets are hid from thee. Oh cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, and enable every one of us to form a right judgment of what we have heard. Stir up, we pray thee, thy power, and come among us; and with great might convince those persons of their guilt and of their danger, who are seeking happiness in the world, and put it into their hearts to seek it in thee. Teach them, blessed Lord, that there is no true happiness to be found in a world which lieth in sin. Let them experience the delusion of all worldly joys, that they may seek for those joys which thine almighty love has to bestow. And to those whom thou hast given grace to seek, give more grace. Confirm and strengthen the good desires of those who are waiting for thy salvation. Keep them by thy power until thou save them from their sins. And save us all, O thou Lord God omnipotent, save us from the power of sin. Deliver us more and more from its dominion. May all the Lord's people serve him, out of a pure heart, and with love unfeigned: and may they go on rejoicing to do or to suffer his will, until he who got himself glory by them upon earth shall be glorified in them in heaven, by bestowing upon them an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And when he cometh thus to be glorified in his saints (and we know not how near the day of his coming may be), oh may it be your happiness and mine then to be found at his right hand, to hear the almighty Judge pronounce us blessed, and to enter into the joy of our Lord, there to praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three self-existent persons in one Jehovah, to whom be honour and glory, dominion and power, thanksgiving and worship, now, and for ever and ever. *Amen*

DISCOURSE X.

CHAP. viii. ver. 5.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

WE have in these words a beautiful representation of our Lord's love to his people. In whatever light we consider him, he is amiable and altogether lovely. He is not only great and good, but has also every thing that is great and good united in him, whereby he is able and willing to save poor sinners unto the uttermost. They can want nothing but what he has to give. And, happy for them, his heart is large and open. He is not straitened in his bowels. He gave proof of it in the days of his flesh, when he never refused any person that came to ask his help. And no weary heavy-laden sinner, who comes to him for his promised rest, has ever since been cast out. He is free to pardon and to cleanse them from all their sins, and to bring them into a state of acceptance with God; and then he is able to keep them through faith unto salvation. This is a sweet part of our Lord's character—he is able to keep them from falling. They are weak in themselves; but he is strong; and by faith his strength becomes theirs. They are engaged in a dangerous warfare, and have many powerful enemies; but the captain of their salvation has conquered them, and has promised to make them also more than conquerors. They have many troubles from within and from without; but he knows how to make them all work together for their good. He is able to carry them safely and sweetly through all dangers. In this amiable light he is considered in the text. He is here drawn with every grace which can recommend and endear him to the affections of his people: for he does not leave them to find their way through the wilderness, nor to overcome the difficulties of their passage through it, nor to get subsistence in it; but he conducts and carries them safe through all, while they lean upon him for strength: for he is here supporting the church while she is journeying through the wilderness of this world to the promised land of everlasting rest. And the church is, every believing soul. Thou makest part of it, whoever thou art, who canst place thy trust and confidence upon Jesus Christ. Thou seest the perfect beauty of this image, and knowest what it means, for the church to come from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved. Oh that the eternal Spirit may teach you all what it means! He can open your eyes to see the sense of it, and can open your hearts to feel its sweetness. The experience of it will make it sweet indeed: and God grant you may now experience it, and may be able to lean upon Jesus Christ for his grace and blessing on what you hear, while I shall

First, Take the words in the same order they lie in the text, and endeavour to give the sense of them; and then,

Secondly, While I shall apply the doctrine to your spiritual benefit and improvement.

The person celebrated in this divine song is Jesus Christ; and his graces and infinite perfections are here described under the most sublime and affecting images. His love to the church; that is, to every believing soul, is the grand design of this highly-finished painting. The manner of the composition is in the way of dialogue. The principal speakers are Christ and the church, and twice or thrice the daughters of Jerusalem, or some standers by, are introduced, in order to ask some leading questions which would give occasion to the answerer to open the subject more fully. These persons are, I suppose, the speakers in the text, and make the inquiry, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?" Who is this? The answer is, it is the church, of whose love to Christ this divine poem treats. And the church is neither the Jewish nor the Gentile, neither the Protestant nor the Papist, neither the Calvinist nor the Lutheran: for the multitude in all outward churches is the same. A man in his natural unregenerate state is just the same, whether he be a Papist or a Protestant; but the few in these outward churches who live and walk in the spirit and power of Christ, they are the church. Every believing soul is a part of it; for of numbers of them the church is composed Whoever

is united by faith to Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church, he is a living member of it. All the rest are dead, formal professors, of whom, God knows, we have too many. The generality of our people content themselves with a foolish notion of their belonging to the church of England, and of their being members of the established church, although they seldom see the inside of a church. They live in ignorance of her doctrines and in disobedience to her discipline. But may not the persons who frequent her services, and constantly attend upon the outward ordinances, think themselves mighty good churchmen? They may, if they be united by saving faith to the head of the church; but without this union, a parcel of loose stones thrown together in a heap would make just such a church as they are: whereas the spiritual building, of which Christ is the chief corner-stone, is fitly joined together and compacted in every part; and the cement or bond of union, which keeps all the lively stones of this spiritual household in their proper place and station, is faith, as the apostle has taught us, Heb. iii. 6: "Christ is a son over his own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence of faith and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end." If you attend ever so much upon the outward ordinances, yet, if you have not this confidence of faith, and this rejoicing of hope, you make no part of the church of Christ; you want the proper cement of this spiritual building: you are but loose stones, and therefore neither united to it, nor any part of it. You come to prayers; you attend twice a day on Sundays; you go once a month to the sacrament: All this is very well, and you may go thus far, nay much farther, and yet be no member of Christ's mystical body. For these outward services profit nothing unless the heart be rightly disposed: and the heart is then rightly disposed when we go to these services in faith, hoping to meet God in them, and to receive such supplies of grace from him as we stand in need of. But when men use the ordinances in hopes of making themselves good, and of attaining some self-righteousness, then they abuse them, and the strictest attenders upon the ordinances with this view are the worst churchmen; because they most effectually cut themselves off from all union with the head of the church. By going about to establish their own righteousness, they entirely deprive themselves of that righteousness of Jesus Christ, without which no man shall see the Lord. If the self-righteous could be made to consider this, they would not rest in forms and ordinances, which are only the beggarly elements of religion when rested in, but would seek the grace of God, which is the life and spirit of the ordinances; and then, as they are his appointed means, he would certainly be found in them. And whoever finds him in them, and thereby receives continual supplies of grace for the advancement of his spiritual life, he is a member of the true church of Christ.

Our reformers have given us an excellent description of the church in the 19th article: "The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance." Here they allow none to be members, no, not even of the visible church, unless they be faithful men: faith uniting them to Jesus Christ is that which makes them good churchmen, as it will evidently appear from a further consideration of this scripture: for the condition of the church is the next particular: "She is coming up from the wilderness," from the waste howling wilderness of this world, and travelling on towards the promised land of everlasting rest.

When man was first created, he was placed in a paradise of delight, where God had provided every thing necessary for the support both of soul and body. But when he transgressed the just and holy law of God, he was driven out of paradise, and turned into the wide barren world, where his body was forced to labour for the bread that perisheth, and to earn it by the sweat of his brow, and his soul was banished from God and from all sweet communion with him, which had made paradise so much like heaven; and the remembrance of its sweetness would make the pleasantest spot upon the earth appear like a desolate wilderness. As God is the life, and his presence is the happiness, of the soul, what must it be without God? More uncomfortable surely than the body would be in the most dismal howling desert: and we are all by nature in this state. The

world is indeed a place of banishment to every son of fallen Adam. What will you call it but a wilderness, where not a morsel of bread grows without human labour and cultivation? And is not this a just picture of the state of the soul, which has no divine or saving knowledge of itself, and can receive none from any of the arts and sciences? This barren earth cannot produce one single ray of heavenly truth. It must all come down from above, as manna did upon the Israelites in the wilderness; otherwise our souls will perish for lack of knowledge, as their bodies would have perished for want of bread. And since this is our condition, how shall we obtain deliverance? We are here in bondage. Sin has chained us down in this wilderness. Satan watches us, and tempts us to love our chains; the vain world smiles upon us, and would make us believe that we are still in paradise: and, God knows, there are too many poor silly creatures who take this world for their only paradise. They are so dotingly fond of it, that nothing can break the enchantment. Though pains and miseries come one upon the back of another, like wave after wave, yet still they cannot entertain one hard thought of this dear world. They love it with all their hearts, and with all their souls, notwithstanding the briers and thorns which tear and scratch their flesh, and the disappointments and vexation they daily meet with. This fatal delusion is the worst part of their case; because, to be in such a wilderness is a great calamity; but, to be in love with it, is a greater. It is a great misfortune to be sick; but to be in love with sickness, is worse than the distemper, and much harder to be cured. And how, then, can the soul recover her liberty? She is enslaved and chained down to this wilderness, and her enemies have her absolutely in their power. She cannot stir one step in her own might. Indeed, she would not desire to stir. She loves her bondage. And since she has neither the will nor the power, how can she escape out of this wilderness? God be praised, there is a way open; and this is, through Jesus, who has declared of himself, "I am the way;" and all that fly to him escape from the miseries of this wilderness, and are coming up from it, though not in their own strength. The first desire to leave it was from Jesus Christ; he enabled the soul to seek deliverance, and then gave her strength to break loose from the chains wherewith she was bound; and in his might she is now travelling on. He has given her a prospect of a better country, and for it she has left off seeking happiness in the wilderness. The honours, riches, and pleasures there to be found, have lost their former value. She has turned her back upon them, and has set out upon her journey heavenwards. And, see! all the way she is coming up from the wilderness she

"Leans upon her beloved." He supports every step. This is the chief part of the beautiful image in the text. We here see the work of faith painted before our eyes in the most beautiful colours. There could not be a finer picture of the believer's reliance upon Christ for grace to support every step, and for strength to carry him on in the Christian life, than to draw the church leaning upon her beloved. To lean and rest the body upon any thing is the perfect representation of faith leaning and resting itself upon Christ. An able expositor upon the passage has these words: "She is leaning on her beloved; that is, as they who are weak make use of a staff in climbing of a strait and steep ground, or ease themselves by leaning upon one that is strong, and especially one whom they love, for helping them in their way; so the believer is said to come up from the wilderness, 'leaning on her beloved;' because she, being weak in herself, and unfit for such a difficult journey, by faith rests on Christ for helping her in the way, whereby she is sustained and carried through in the duties of a holy walk, and the difficulties in her way, till she come through the wilderness into the land of rest."

Every step she takes, spiritually, by faith and love, she cleaves to and relies upon Christ. There is a sufficiency and efficacy in Christ to save to the uttermost, to begin, and to carry on, and to perfect the whole work of salvation: he is the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of believers; and therefore they would not only by faith be united to him, and lean upon him for the pardon of their sins by his righteousness, but they would also by faith depend upon him for their sanctification, for their dying to sin, and being alive

unto God. And thus, by the exercise of faith, they fulfil the commandment. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding." If they overcome the world, the victory is from trusting in the Lord by faith, from the power of Christ apprehended and applied by faith. If sin be dying in them, it is by the efficacy of his death apprehended and applied by faith. If they be alive unto God, "It is not I," says Paul, "but Christ liveth in me." It is by exercising faith on Christ that I receive strength to get forward in the way of duty, and to make a progress in holiness. I derive continual support from him; and the more I can depend and lean upon him by faith, the faster I go, and the farther I advance in the way: for leaning on him, and coming up, are joined together in the text. If you gain any ground, it must be by leaning upon the beloved Jesus for his support and strength: for he is "the beloved" here spoken of—the beloved Son of the Father, in whom he declared he was well pleased; and he is become the beloved of the believing soul, which is now awakened by his Spirit, and stirred up by his power, to leave this barren wilderness, and to seek a better country; that is, a heavenly. His love began the first desire, and still carries it on. His Spirit opened the eyes of faith to see a better country, and supports every step towards it: and the believer, leaning and relying upon his beloved Jesus, goes on sweetly and safely. He beholds infinite excellencies, and daily discovers new worlds of delight in him; and the sense of his own interest in them increases the delight. He can call all these his own: and to have a property in them makes them still more valuable. In this divine Song he frequently lays a great stress upon this particular, especially in the fifth chapter, where he has been drawing a picture of his Lord; and he puts the finishing stroke to it in these words: "This is my beloved; and this is my friend." All his excellencies appear with a double grace to me, because I can call them mine. This is the happy experience of every faithful soul. May the Holy Spirit bestow it upon you, giving you a view of the Redeemer's excellencies, and convincing you of your interest in them, while I am,

Secondly, Applying the doctrine contained in the text to your spiritual benefit and improvement. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness?" It is the believer, whose affections are now raised above all earthly things; and he is coming up from the world leaning, every step he takes in the way towards heaven, upon his beloved Jesus. The believer's heavenly mindedness is here represented by his coming up or ascending from the wilderness, wherein he sojourned in his way to heaven, as the Israelites did in the wilderness, while they were on their journey to the promised land. The believer looks upon the pleasantest and best cultivated spot of this earth as a mere wilderness, because there is no true comfort or perfect rest for the soul in any of the good things of it. He has left off seeking happiness in the enjoyment of them, being convinced that all worldly joys are empty and unsatisfying, and therefore he has turned his back upon them. He remembers Lot's wife. He would not cast one wishful look after them. He keeps walking on with an unwearied course, because he has an almighty support. He leans upon one who is able to bear up every step, who can strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Christ is his support in his walk heavenwards. He takes Christ for his sanctification as well as for his justification. Christ must do all in him, as well as for him. Christ must enable him to do the works proper to a state of acceptance, as well as bring him into it: for the believer knows of no power whereby he may be enabled to die unto sin, and to live unto God, but his power only, who is almighty to save his people from their sins. This is the doctrine. From the first moment our backs are turned upon the world, and we begin to leave the wilderness of sin and misery, until we come to the promised land of everlasting rest, we must lean, all the way, upon Christ. He must be our stay and support. Faith must rely upon him for the success of every thing we undertake; and by this reliance it secures success. The greatest part of our misfortunes and disappointments in our temporal as well as religious affairs come from the ignorance of this doctrine. We know not how to trust all in the hands of our loving Saviour. Worldly prudence will be managing its temporal matters without resigning all to him: and men's

pride and self-sufficiency cannot bear to be stripped of all merit, and to rely entirely for acceptance upon the merits of another. It is too low and degrading an idea of the dignity of man to suppose him to be in a state of condemnation until Christ justify him, and to be unable to take one step in his Christian course unless the Spirit of Christ assist and support him. These truths are too mortifying to be generally received; but believers know them to be truths by happy experience. They are assured that there is no other way to walk contentedly and cheerfully homeward but to lean and rest all the way upon him who is both their guide and their strength, who has them and all their concerns in his gracious hands. Although this be the only way to true happiness, yet it is extremely difficult to convince sinners of it. Every error leads them away from it; and error is infinite. I will endeavour, through God's help, to correct some of the most common errors. And

First, I shall speak of those which all careless sinners fall into. Sin cuts off all communion with, and reliance upon, God; and whoever lives in his natural unregenerate state cannot rely upon him for any good: the sinner leans upon some worldly enjoyment for happiness; and the careless sinner is secure in this worldly enjoyment. He has no thoughts for seeking happiness in Jesus Christ, and therefore has no desire to lean with faith upon him. The danger of this is evident; because every man in it is under condemnation, and is a child of wrath; and it is wonderful that the devil should be so far able to delude sinners as to make them sit easy under it: for, did they but know and feel their condition, as it really is, sinful and dangerous, they would then acknowledge themselves to be miserable sinners; and were they convinced of their want of salvation, and that there is no Saviour but Jesus Christ, then would they in earnest seek salvation through him, and, not as they do, labour to deprive themselves of it with all their might: for they are daily adding to their sin, and to their guilt, and to their misery. When they read, "There is salvation in none other than Jesus Christ," they are deluded into a false peace, although they are not assured they have salvation in him. When God declares, "that without holiness no man shall see him," they know they are not holy, and yet they never consider what eternal misery it will be not to see God. Thus these careless sinners being out of a state of salvation, are in danger of perishing every moment. Jesus Christ alone can save them, and yet they prefer sin to him and his eternal salvation. The guilt of this is so monstrous, that men could not fall into it unless they were under a strong delusion. And yet the extreme folly of this conduct is equal to the guilt of it. Men who have no rest nor stay upon Christ cannot be happy in the present world. They are not upon the foundation, the rock of ages. Their happiness is built upon sand, against which, when the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, it will fall. When the evil day comes, these careless sinners have nothing to rest upon. When affliction presses hard upon them, they sink under it. When sickness seizes them, down fall their high spirits, the approach of death is most dreadful, and they sometimes die for fear of dying. Or if they meet with heavy troubles, they are often so miserable, that life is quite a burden; and if natural conscience should at this time begin to torment them with its horrors, these, added to their other distresses, would overset them. Having none of the comforts of the gospel to support them under this complicated misery, they often seek relief in self-murder. This is frequently the cause of that dreadful crime which can never be repented of. And thus these poor miserable cowards murder themselves rather than live in pain, and fly to hell for refuge from the miseries of life. Are not these evident proofs that there is no solid happiness out of Christ, and that whatever men lean upon for happiness but him, are nothing better than so many broken reeds? Do we not see these proofs confirmed by daily experience? When God sends any public calamity, the sword, or the pestilence, or famine, sinners receive them as judgments, and are terrified but not reformed. If he arise, to shake terribly the earth, their hearts tremble more than the ground does under their feet; they fear lest it should open every moment and swallow them up. If it should, their consciences tell them they cannot escape the pit of destruction. This is the miserable condition of careless

sinners, who have no trust and confidence in Jesus Christ. They are an easy prey to every enemy, and they are made miserable by the fears and terrors of their own consciences. And is it not the foolishness of folly to be always tossed upon such a tempestuous sea when you may be saved from all the storms of life? Who would choose to have his peace of mind lie at the mercy of every wind and wave? Is this prudent, is this safe, when he that commandeth the winds and the waves has only to say, "Peace, be still," and there will be a great calm? Thy tempestuous soul will be composed. Thou wilt find a peace of mind that passeth all understanding. O unpardoned sinner! hast thou no desire, hast thou no wish now rising in thy mind for the enjoyment of this peace of God? May he, without whom thou canst not so much as think a good thought, put it into thy heart to seek it. And when thou art once made sensible of thy sore disease, here is thy remedy. Christ is the infallible physician of the soul, and he has a sovereign balm to heal every malady of sin. Does thy conscience accuse and torment? The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus can take out the sense of guilt, and give thee joy and peace in believing. Dost thou begin to be weary of thy sins and thy sufferings? Ask Jesus Christ to take off thy burden. Come to him, who bore all thy sins, and he will ease thee of thy load, and thou shalt find peace and rest unto thy soul. He has promised it to every returning sinner; and he is a God of truth. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee." This is his promise, and he daily fulfils it. Look among believers, and thou wilt see it literally fulfilled. Thou canst not deny but that, being justified by faith, they have peace with God, and are happy in the sense of his love to them through Jesus Christ their Lord; whereby they are supported and comforted under all God's dealings with them, knowing that he will make all things work together for their good. And accordingly, we read in scripture of his having never failed them, who leaned upon him for help. When they were visited with sickness, or poverty, or any other affliction, he enabled them to bear his fatherly correction without murmuring or repining. When sin cries aloud for vengeance, and justice draws the sword, and cuts off the inhabitants of the earth with a swift destruction, then believers happily experience that their gracious God, in the midst of wrath, remembers mercy. His judgments upon his enemies are mercies to them. When the earth quakes and trembles under their feet, their soul does not melt away because of the trouble. The rock upon which they stand cannot be moved, and therefore, in the midst of the earthquake, they can triumphantly say, "God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Would not you think yourselves happy if this was your case? And yet, believers have still a greater happiness. When death itself approaches, it is welcome; for the sting of death is taken out, and they have no fear left about any thing but sin. They are more afraid of sin than of poison. They would not live in sin to gain the world; and in the strength of their beloved Saviour, on whom they lean and rely, they can, and do, conquer sin! so that it does not reign in their mortal bodies. What do you think of the safety and happiness of those persons who are afraid of nothing but of offending their reconciled Father? Certainly they are the happiest men upon earth; and every sinner would envy them if the devil had not propagated an opinion that they are all under a delusion. If any of you, my brethren, have entertained this opinion, weigh the matter carefully, and you will find this makes nothing for your case. For what you suppose to be a delusion is a sweet and comfortable state of mind, promised in the word of God, and bestowed upon the children of God. And are they deluded, think ye, who say they have received nothing more than what God had promised to give? That faith by which ye suppose us deluded, does certainly free us from the commission of many sins and from many of the miseries of the present life, and it deludes us into a kind of fortitude, that not only enables us to bear reproach, contempt, injuries, and afflictions, but also to rejoice under them, when we meet them for following Christ. Oh, happy delusion! We are deluded into a strong belief that God loves us in Jesus Christ; and therefore we are confident that whatever he appoints for us is the best. Be

it poverty, or sickness, or any outward evil, we can resign ourselves contentedly to his holy will, being assured that our loving Father would send us nothing but what will be for our good. Is all this a delusion? Can a man be deluded into such real solid happiness? Glory be to God, I have tasted a little of it; and I would not part with the blessing for a thousand worlds. Upon this earth there is no happiness like it. Heaven only exceeds it. Therefore you gain nothing by giving credit to the devil's lie. He would have you to believe that all God's people are under a delusion, and that they only fancy they are safe and happy by leaning upon Jesus Christ. And can you believe this barefaced lie? Who but the father of lies could raise such an evil report upon the good land? and who but his children would give any credit to it? for the Spirit of truth speaks a different language. Hear what he has promised, and then judge whether we are deluded who say, he has fulfilled his promise to us: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Here he engages to keep those persons in perfect peace, by his everlasting strength, whose minds are stayed upon him. Fear then, careless sinner, to call this perfect peace a delusion: for thereby thou wouldst ascribe to the devil the glory of God's work; but rather ask God to show thee thy guilt and wretchedness, that thou mayst find thy want of that peace which God has to give. Hast thou no desire to ask? If thou canst not send up one wish for it, may his good Spirit now put it into thy heart. Oh that thou couldst pray to be in the happy state of the faithful soul, "Coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved." And to every one who desires to be in this state I make my second remark.

I suppose you begin to find the heavy burden of sin; and it is growing intolerable: then look to Christ, that he may take it upon him, and ease you. He can sustain it; for he hath borne the weight of the sins of the world; and he will ease you of your burden whenever you can cast it upon the Lord. But if you are discouraged from trusting in him, and find your sins to be so many and so great that you fear he will not receive you, fear not. Be your sins ever so heinous, if you are sensible of them, and can ask mercy, he will be merciful He never shut any one out of mercy because he was a great sinner. The greatest have found mercy, and so may you, if you go as one of the greatest to ask it. Ask, and ye shall have. Pray to Jesus for his help, and he will raise you up. Pray for faith, and he will enable you to lean upon him for wisdom, and rightcousness, and holiness, and eternal redemption.

But you have, you say, been praying and waiting upon him, and yet you find nothing but coldness and deadness in your heart. You make no progress. Though you desire to lean upon Christ every step, yet you cannot put your whole trust and confidence in him; your mind is full of so many doubts and fears. Several persons, when they first set out in the ways of religion, get into this temper. They are always disputing and doubting whether this step be right, and that service accepted, looking too much into their own hearts, and looking too little at Christ; and so they puzzle and perplex themselves, and can gain no ground. If you would be freed from these difficulties, follow the light which God gives, and make use of the help which he offers. And that is the way to receive more. You, my brethren, are seeking his promised salvation Inquire what you are to trust to and to rest upon at present. If God has made a provision for your case, it ought to be your support. And has he not left you the word of promise to rely upon? He has commanded you; and it is your bounden duty to believe the report which God has given of his Son. You are required to take him at his word, and to believe that Christ is, as the scripture hath set him forth, a Saviour willing and able to save every sinner who comes unto him. This is the scripture character of Christ; and if you do not believe what it says concerning him, you make God a liar. And you will call in question both the faithfulness and the goodness of God if you think that he has promised any thing to them that seek which he will not fulfil to you who are seeking. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but not one tittle of God's promises shall pass away until all be fulfilled.

Is not this, then, my brethren, the point wherein you fail? You are seeking Christ and his salvation; but you want something more than the word of promise before you rest upon it in the manner God requires. You desire a particular application of the promises, and want the experience of them, before you can wholly rely upon the faithfulness and truth of God who made them. Examine whether this be not the case: and if it be, consider how you discredit the word of God. You are commanded to believe it; and, unless you think God is a liar, you may safely rely upon it. It is your duty to receive Christ as he is there set forth, and to wait for the witness of the Spirit in the application of Christ when and in what manner he shall think proper to give it you. And suppose your belief of his word of promise, your faith of reliance may be very weak; yet, however, bring it into act. Let it operate. Lean upon Jesus Christ as well as you are enabled, and you will certainly go on, lamely perhaps at first; but, however, halt on, and believe that he pities you, and lay the care of bringing you safely through upon him. Do not lie complaining and arguing; but believe his word, and act faith upon the word of promise; and the Lord shall be with you. And the weaker you find yourself, you have the more need to rely upon Christ. Look more at him, and less at yourself, and wait humbly upon him, and you will not long want his promised comfort. He will give you joy and peace in believing, and show you that you are in the happy number of the redeemed of the Lord, to whom I make my third and last remark.

My Christian brethren, you have experienced the truth of the doctrine in the text, and you know the happiness of leaning with faith upon Christ. You are enabled to trust the whole of your salvation on him. In all your duties, you lean upon him. You hear and read the word, and pray, and give alms, and attend at the Lord's table, not to make yourselves righteous in the sight of God This is not your motive. You know that he who made your persons righteous, must also make your duties acceptable. He that justified you is the same also that must sanctify you. Nothing can make you holy but his good Spirit. To this you trust. And as he has promised that his grace shall at all times be sufficient for you, you can therefore lean upon Jesus in the worst of times and the sorest trials. The more you are afflicted, the more do you rely upon him, and cleave the closer to him, and therefore the stronger you grow. Sickness cannot weaken your hold; death itself cannot break it off: "for when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," says the Psalmist, "then thou art my support; then thy rod and thy staff comfort me:" leaning upon thee, I neither fear death nor him that hath the power of death.

The text, thus explained and applied, teaches us one of the most useful lessons for the conduct of life. All men are seeking happiness, but few find it; because they seek it where it is not. It has been a general inquiry among thinking men, how they might be able to bear up under afflictions; how they might keep the mind easy, when the body was in pain and sickness; and how they might be happy in all circumstances: but upon the principles of moral philosophy they could never fortify the mind against the evils of life. Various remedies were proposed; but they all failed when they were brought to the trial. But the great secret is revealed in my text. If you would be always happy, lean upon Christ: take off all trust and confidence from every other object, and place them upon Christ: it is a command: "Cast all your care upon him," he will bear it for you: but, in order to do this, you must know by faith that "he careth for you:" for how can you trust yourself and all your affairs in his hands, unless you have some evidence of his love to you? But when you receive faith from the gift, and from the operation of God, and thereby know your interest in the promises made through Christ, and, as our church expresses it, are assured of the favour and goodness of God towards you, then you can lean upon him for his promised help. And this faith can carry you safely through all troubles and temptations, be they ever so great, because it is almighty. Faith does not attack them in the strength of nature, but in the omnipotence of grace. It relies upon the promise of God, and believes that it shall be done according to his word. When faith can thus plead the promises, and lean upon Christ for the fulfilling them, it will certainly receive whatever is

promised—power to subdue sin—power to live unto God—grace sufficient to resist temptations—comfort under afflictions—strength in the inner man when the body is in pain and sickness—and victory over the last enemy, death: "for all things are possible to him that believeth."

Here, then, is the infallible scripture remedy for the evils of life. May the Lord God dispose all your hearts to take it! If you would be safe and happy, lean upon Christ. But if there be any of you, my brethren, who are still determined to lean upon some other thing for happiness, be assured it will deceive you in the end. You may seem to go on smoothly and merrily for a while, but there is a day coming when you will see the falseness of your confidence. In the day of sickness, in the day of death, and much more in the great day of judgment, you will have nothing to support you unless you lean upon Jesus Christ. Be persuaded, then, in time to put your whole trust and confidence in him. If you see your want of a Saviour, go to him, and he will supply all your wants. Ask and seek the precious gift of faith until you are able to turn your backs upon all worldly happiness and to come up from the wilderness leaning upon your beloved Jesus. And whenever the grace of God brings you into this happy state, you will then go in your Christian course sweetly and cheerfully. You will find the presence of your God with you every step, and, being mightily strengthened with his Spirit in the inner man, the work of salvation will prosper in your souls. Oh that we may be all strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, to travel on in his strength. May every one of you who has come up from the wilderness of the world to the house of the Lord this day be enabled to lean and rely upon Christ for his promised help; and may receive out of his fulness grace for grace. If you have never yet been united to him by saving faith, God grant his good Spirit may bless this discourse, and make it the means of uniting you to Jesus Christ. And if you be now united, oh may you find the bond of union growing stronger and stronger every day, until death perfect it and eternity continue it in endless bliss and glory. We look up unto thee, O most gracious God, for these blessings; and we ask them in that excellent form of prayer which our church has taught us to use this day. Enable us to pray in faith, while we say.

"O Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy church and household continually in thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord *Amen*" (Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.)

DISCOURSE XI.

CHAP. viii. ver. 6, 7.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

THIS Song of loves, which treats of the pure and spiritual affection between Christ and the believer, is very little understood. Worldly and sensual men read it with worldly and sensual tempers, and therefore find nothing divine in it. It is to such persons of all scripture the most exceptionable; and no wonder. St. Paul gives us the reason: "The natural man," says he, "discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned:" for want of this spiritual discernment, he cannot see the things of the Spirit of God treated of in this divine song. But it is nevertheless a fine painting, although these blind men cannot judge of it. The subject is the union of Christ with the believer. He that is not a believer does not know what it is to be united to Christ; and therefore he is as incapable of judging of this poem as a blind man is of the expression of a beautiful picture. But he that has the love of

Christ in his heart, who is one with Christ and Christ with him, he knows what the believer means when, speaking to Christ, in the text, he says, " Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." This is the believer's prayer. He has tasted of the loving-kindness of his Lord. The Holy Ghost had shed abroad the love of Christ in his heart, and he could truly say, " I love him, because he first loved me." He was happy in the enjoyment of his Lord's love: but he wanted more, as every one does who has tasted of it. He hungered and thirsted for more full experience of it, and earnestly prayed to be rooted and grounded in love, that he might be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. The believer knew it was his interest to study this love, and to try to take some dimensions of it, although it surpass all human understanding, yea, the understanding of all saints, of angels and glorified spirits, to comprehend it fully; but the more he did comprehend, the happier he found himself When he considered the wonders of Christ's love, in his humiliation, in his life, in his sufferings, in his death, in his resurrection and ascension, and in the glories of his mediatorial kingdom, he found particular sweetness in this consideration—that he had an interest in all the good offices of this love. He knew that whatever it did for sinners was done for him. And would not this greatly recommend the study of Christ's love above all other studies: for how exceedingly delightful must it be to trace out the steps of his love, since every new discovery is a fresh addition to the believer's happiness? Upon this experimental plan the speaker in the text considered the subject. He prays for a more full and perfect enjoyment of Christ's love, and urges his petition by several motives taken from what Christ did and suffered for sinners. He takes a view of the triumphs of his love in the greatness of his actions and sufferings, and then by them pleads with him for a more abundant measure of love. May the divine Spirit enable every one of you to put up the same prayer. May he shed abroad in your hearts that love which will make your consideration of this scripture useful and profitable. Under his guidance, then, let us inquire,

First, Into the sense and meaning of the words; and

Secondly, Into the practical use we can make of them.

This divine Song is drawn up in the manner of a dialogue. The speakers are Christ and the church. The church is every faithful soul which is united to Christ as the members are to the body, or the branches to the vine. When some men hear the word church, they are apt to apply it to national or congregational assemblies; but the scripture applies it to believers, and to them only, allowing none to be true members, not even of any Christian communion, unless they be members of Christ's mystical body: and our reformers, in the 19th article, give us this definition of the visible church: " It is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God and the sacraments be duly administered." One of these faithful men (for of numbers of them the church is composed) is here expressing the fervent prayer of his heart, to have more full experience of Christ's love. He had no doubt of the favour and goodness of God towards him in Christ. He had received many clear proofs of it. He had the scripture marks and evidences in his own soul of Christ's being his beloved and his friend; and he was happy in knowing this. The sense of Christ's love to him had enabled him to love Christ in return, and therefore he was led to pray for the continuance and for the increase of Christ's love: " Set me as a seal upon thine heart;" and convey to me, under thy seal, all the graces and blessings which thy love has to give: for the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: he knoweth them that have his seal upon them. Oh, seal me, then, for thine! When a man sets his hand and seal to a will or to a deed of gift, it is as if he should declare, This is my last will and testament: this is my act and deed. So, when Christ sets the believer as a seal upon his heart, it is as if he should declare, I seal this person

for mine, and give unto him freely all the benefits of the New Testament in my blood; and this is properly attested by my word and by my Spirit. The word is the outward witness; the Spirit, applying the word, is the inward witness. The scripture very clearly assigns to him the office of sealing believers, as Eph. i. 13: "After that ye believed in Christ, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise:" and, chap. iv. 30, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Christ redeemed both our real and personal estate; but we are not in possession of either until it be conveyed to us under the seal of the Holy Spirit. Christ's redemption without the Holy Spirit's application is like a deed without a seal, which you know can legally convey nothing. It is the signing and sealing that makes it good in law. And when the Holy Spirit seals the believer, then he receives the earnest of his inheritance. The believer in the text had this earnest in himself, and therefore he prayed fervently for a greater measure of Christ's love, and he prayed the more fervently, as well from the lively remembrance he had of his former misery, while he was without Christ in the world, as from the pleasing sense of his present happiness. All the time his heart had been set upon the world, he remembered in what a vain shadow he had been walking, and how he had disquieted himself in vain. From whatever he sought happiness, he was disappointed; and therefore, convinced of the emptiness of every creature-comfort and of the sinfulness of resting in them—having found the best of them unable to fill the desires of his soul—he had turned from the creature to God. God had every thing to give that could make him completely happy; and God the Saviour was willing to give it. As his power is, so is his love; they are alike infinite. The speaker in the text had happy experience of Christ's love, and did not doubt of his power to save. With a grateful sense of what Christ had already done, he prayed that the Holy Spirit would make him increase and abound in love. My brethren, is this your prayer? Do you know so much of his love to you as to pray for more love to him? If you are not seeking happiness in his love, in what have you been seeking it all your life, or in what are you now seeking it? Out of Christ you could seek it in nothing but in the sinful love of the creature. And now ask yourselves what you have found. If you deal honestly with your souls, you must confess that you have met with continual disappointments. And why, then, will you not be wise from experience? Are you tired and weary of the dull round of worldly joys? Then pray the Holy Spirit to turn your affections from these deluding objects to the Lord Jesus; and when your hearts are set upon him, he will then make you perfectly, eternally blessed. Blessedness is his to give. The world has it not. Oh, turn then from it to our loving God, and beg you may know so much of his love as to be able to pray with the believer, in the text, that Christ would "set you as a seal upon his heart," and let you know your interest in his love. When you are sealed for his, and find his affections are placed upon you, then you will have the comfortable enjoyment of his present graces and sure and certain hope of your inheriting the promises of eternal life: for then he will also "set you as a seal upon his arm." His arm is his power. The hand is the active part of the body, by which the strength of it is exerted. We labour and work with our hands; and when the scripture speaks of the arm of the Lord, it means his active power, which the faithful soul here desires may be exercised continually for its salvation. To be as a seal upon his heart would be of no use without the seal upon his arm. His love would not be a blessing unless it was an active, operative love. But it is therefore desirable to partake of Christ's love, because it will always awake the arm of the Lord, and will bring salvation. His love and his power are never separated; his heart and his arm act together; and therefore the believing soul does not put them asunder, but prays, in the text, that the beloved Saviour would give her experience of both:—Oh, set me as a seal upon thy heart, that whatever thy love disposes thee to do for sinners, I may share and partake in it! Oh set me also as a seal upon thine arm! Let me also, blessed Jesus, be engraven on the palms of thy hands, that in all thy works thou mayst remember me with mercy! Let thy love engage thy power to make all things work together for my good.

These are the desires of the faithful in the text; and they are the fervent desires

of every true believer. And if there be any of you who are not convinced that these are the breathings of true faith, then you are ignorant of the nature of Christ's love. You know it not, because you have had no experience of it. If you had ever found your want of his love, and had ever tasted of it, you would bear your testimony to the truth of the following description: *viz.* That his love is strong as death; the ardour of it is harder than the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame, burning with such an inextinguishable affection, that many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it; and of so inestimable a price, that if a man should think of buying it, or of meriting it, and would give all the substance of his house for it, it would utterly be despised. These are the excellencies of Christ's love, for which the faithful soul so earnestly desired further experience of it, and for which you will desire it with the same earnestness, as soon as you are made sensible of your wants. When you find the misery of sin, and the wretched slavery of serving Satan and the world and the flesh, who have no wages to give you but death, then you will wish your souls under the protection of that love which is "strong as death." The love of Christ was stronger than death: for he conquered death, and took out its sting. And the sting of death will be taken out of your conscience when it is sprinkled with his atoning blood. His love brought him down from heaven, and he took a body of flesh, in which he might obey, and suffer, and die. Accordingly, he became obedient, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He died the painful, ignominious, and accursed death of the cross. Greater love hath no man than this—that a man lay down his life for his friends: but how far does the love of Jesus exceed this instance? He laid down his life, not for friends, but for sinners, for enemies, the bitterest enemies, who persecuted him even unto death—he died for his persecutors. Greater love than this there cannot be: for as he died to save his enemies from death, so he rose again, that they might rise to a newness of life, whereby he showed "his love to be stronger than the grave." Our translation reads, "jealousy is cruel as the grave." The word rendered jealousy denotes the ardour and intenseness of Christ's love; not what he thought of the love of others to him, but the nature of his love to them—the great degree, the flaming ardour and intenseness of it, which made him submit, not only to death, but also to go down to the grave. In the prison of the grave, the bodies of all the dead were shut up. The prison was secured with bars and gates, and guarded by him that had the power of death; and he had suffered not one prisoner, for four thousand years, to escape. To this prison the Lord Jesus went down; and he was detained in it for three days: but it was not possible that he should be holden any longer. On the third day he broke through the gate of death, and demonstrated that his love was stronger than the grave. And when he is describing his victory to the beloved apostle, he represents it under a very beautiful image: "I am he that liveth," says he, "and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." My brethren, are any of you afraid to die? Has death still a sting, and the grave victory over you? If they have, did you ever consider what was the reason? Is it not because you either do not believe that Christ has the keys of death and the grave in his hands, or else you have no certainty that he will use them for your interest? You have no knowledge of Christ's love to you. The Holy Ghost never shed it abroad in your heart. Perhaps you never desired it: and therefore you are ignorant of his having died and risen from the grave for your salvation. If you knew your interest in his death, and had experienced the power of his resurrection, you would no longer fear death and the grave; for then faith would enable you to triumph over both. You would have nothing to fear, but every thing blessed to hope for from them, after you knew that Christ had set you as a seal upon his heart, and as a seal upon his arm; for then death and the grave, instead of separating you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, would bring you to the more full and eternal enjoyment of it.

My brethren, if you have not this love, do you desire it? Can you pray for it? If the Holy Spirit has discovered to you your want of it, and has put you upon asking, ask, and he will grant you your heart's desire. You shall know Christ and

the power of his resurrection—know him to be your Saviour and your God. And this experience of his love to you will open to your understanding the next words in the description; *viz.* that the ardour of Christ's love is like coals of fire, burning clear and bright with a most vehement flame, "such as many waters could not quench." These many waters are the many troubles he met with; and they were so many that they would have quenched any love but his. He went through a sea of troubles from the manger to the cross; but his love burned all the time with such a vehement flame that the many waters he waded through could not quench it. Herod persecuted him while a child, and forced him to flee his country, but his love to his enemies brought him back. His very humiliation, until he entered on his public ministry, was a great trial. As God he was the highest in heaven; as man he was one of the lowest on earth; that was consequently the highest love which stooped the lowest to save sinners. You may read in the gospels the history of the many troubles he went through. His public life was one continued scene of opposition. Trouble came, like wave after wave, raging and lifting up their heads on high; but the ardour of his love mounted and flamed above them all. You know that nothing cools love so much as meeting with hatred: he was hated even for doing good, and yet he loved his enemies. They poured cold water upon his love, by railing at his doctrine, blaspheming his person, blaspheming his miracles; but his love, being of an uncommon nature, burned the brighter—he went on doing good to his revilers and his blasphemers. And though the rulers and nation of the Jews, a few poor people excepted, would not receive him for the promised Messiah, yet these many waters could not quench his love: it burned with a pure flame, which neither the ingratitude nor the vile treatment of mankind could in the least damp or abate. And we need not wonder that many waters could not quench, "for the floods could not drown the love of Christ." It still kept its ardour when the overflowing flood broke over his head. When the floods of ungodly men rose up against him, and tried his love with every pain and reproach which is distressing to human nature, they only served to make his love shine out the purer and brighter. In his last sufferings these floods tried to drown his love; but it mounted up triumphant above all. In the garden, on the eve of the passion, he had a prospect of what he was to undergo; and as there was no other way for man to be saved but for him to drink the bitter cup, he therefore resolved to take it and to drink it up to the very dregs. No sooner had he spoken the words, "Father thy will be done," but the cup was instantly put into his hands. He is apprehended, and all his disciples forsake him. Not one, not Peter himself, durst own him. As a malefactor he is brought before the high priest; accused for saying he was the Son of God; shamefully ill-treated and spit upon; blindfolded, by way of insult on his prophetical office, and struck upon the face; led to Pilate; tried and acquitted, and yet whipped and scourged; crowned with thorns, by way of insult on his regal office, and the thorns driven into his head by the barbarous soldiers until the blood ran down his temples; and then, innocent, and pronounced so by his judge, nevertheless given up to the rage of the people—to the floods of ungodly men that went about to devour him. They thirsted for his blood, and shed it as if it had been water. Having gotten him into their power, they led him out, marking the way as he went with his blood; and having reached mount Calvary, there they prepare their instruments of death. They drive the nails through his hands and feet, fastening his body to the cross, and then, lifting up the cross, they stand by to insult and blaspheme him. O love divine! how triumphantly didst thou rise above all these floods of opposition, when that sweet prayer came out of thy dying mouth, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" But he had another flood of opposition to withstand, infinitely more dreadful than the former: he had the wrath and justice of his Father to sustain, who, finding all our sins upon him, took full satisfaction, even to the uttermost farthing. His Father had before declared, by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:" but now his justice draws the sword in wrath upon his beloved Son. Whence was this? What! is there any variableness or shadow of turning in God? No. He was still the beloved Son of the Father; but he was made sin for us, who knew no sin: he was wounded for our transgressions, and was bruised

for our iniquities: he bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows, from the time he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood in the garden, until he expired upon the cross. And what he endured while that scripture was fulfilling—"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord"—and justice was taking full and perfect satisfaction for sin upon him—no tongue can tell; no imagination can conceive. He says himself, "All thy waves and storms are gone over me." They broke upon his head, and with so much fury, that he complains, in the 88th Psalm, ver. 7, "Thine indignation lieth hard upon me, and thou hast vexed me with all thy storms." When all the waves and storms of the Father's wrath, which should have fallen upon us, vexed him, he might well say, "Was there ever sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?" There never was any sorrow like that which occasioned this lamentation: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" All the powers in heaven and earth heard this cry, and were affected with it: the sun hid his face; there was darkness over the whole earth; the rocks were rent; the graves opened; the dead arose; the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom. What the bleeding Lamb of God suffered at this time surpasseth human understanding. But, however, in this day of the Lord's fierce anger, the floods of divine wrath did not drown our Lord's love. He bore up under all, until love heard the happy words, "It is finished," and then he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. But his love did not die. No. It gained the greatest victory in death. We read of Samson, that the dead whom he slew at his death were more than those whom he slew in his life: which was a type and figure of the great victory which Christ obtained by his death; for he then vanquished all the enemies of our peace. His love was stronger than death; because, through death he overcame death and him that had the power of death. It was stronger than the grave; for he redeemed his own body before it had seen corruption. And he arose from the grave as the first fruits of the dead; and, behold, he has in his hands the keys of hell and of death; so that neither death nor hell shall have any power over them that believe in him. And being risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, he is seated upon the throne of glory; and he neither wants love nor power to bestow upon them that believe in him every grace and every blessing which can make them happy in time and in eternity.

Surely, then, the love of Christ is beyond all value. What price can you set upon it? Might not the faithful, with good reason, say of it in the text, "If a man would give all the substance of his house for this love, it would utterly be despised?" for it is a free love; it cannot be bought. It is inestimable; and the riches of it are unsearchable. With what can you think of purchasing it? With the substance of a man's house? Why it is one of the free gifts of this love: and can you then think of meriting or buying it with its own gifts? This love created all things that are in heaven and that are in earth; so that you have nothing to offer it but what is already its own. And if you are one of the Lord's people, it redeemed you from the bondage of sin and Satan, of death and the grave, and you have only to receive its blessings, and to be thankful: for you yourself, and all that you have, are not your own. You are bought with a price. And what can you offer the Lord but what is already his own? His by right of creation; by right of redemption doubly his. And must he not then utterly despise both you and your gifts if you think that the substance of your house is to be compared with his love? He will despise you, and you will feel his resentment through the ages of eternity, if you disparage his love so much as to think that any thing in the world, yea, the whole world itself, ought to be put in competition with his love. They who have tasted of it know it to be invaluable. The least experience of it is worth thousands of worlds. And oh that He who has it to give may now shed it abroad in all your hearts, that you may feel the happiness of it! May this be the desire of every soul here present—Set me, Lord Jesus, as a seal upon thine heart; set me as a seal upon thine arm: for thy love to sinners is strong as death; the ardour of it is mightier than the grave, it burned like bright coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters could not quench thy love, nor could the floods drown it. If a man would

give all the substance of his house to purchase thy love, he and his gifts would be utterly despised.

My brethren, can you make use of this prayer? Are these the pious breathings of your souls? You have heard, from the sense of the words, that these were the pious breathings of the faithful under the Old Testament; and they must be yours under the New, if you would experience the comforts of the doctrine in the text: and to stir you up to seek them is the subject of my second general head; under which I shall make two or three short practical inferences.

The first relates to the manner in which the words are drawn up. They are in the form of a prayer, founded upon past experience of Christ's love, and earnestly desiring a larger share of it. And is this your heart's desire? Can you willingly and heartily pray to have the love of other objects shut out of your hearts, and to find your happiness in the love of Christ, and in being sealed for his? If you can pray thus, may you daily find more reason to love Jesus Christ. But if you cannot, is it not expedient that you should consider what is the reason? For has not Jesus Christ every perfection in himself, and every grace and blessing to give, which ought to draw the affections of miserable sinners unto himself? And yet you have no love for him. What is the cause which makes you act so directly against your own interest? Is it not an unlawful attachment to the world, or to some object in it, which you set up against Christ? You prefer it to him. You think it can make you happier than he can; and so you give up your hearts to its service. Herein you are guilty of a monstrous absurdity; because you prefer creature comforts to God; and you are guilty of monstrous wickedness; because you leave God to idolize the creature. And though, after daily experience, you find that the creature cannot make you happy, yet still you idolize it. What prodigious power must sin have over a man; how entirely must it have blinded his understanding, when it can make him act against the clearest evidence even of his own senses! for upon whatever object you place your hearts, in preference or in opposition to Christ, it cannot make you happy; for this plain reason—because you sin in giving that love to it which is due to him. "My son," says he, "give ME thy heart." I will make thee happy by taking guilt out of thy conscience, by pardoning thee freely, and shedding the love of God abroad in thy heart. Until this be done, no creature can make you happy. While sin is unpardoned, while guilt is in the conscience, and while the broken law condemns, what can money, what can pleasure, what can honour give of happiness? They may for a time soothe the uneasiness of the mind, but they cannot remove it. Nothing can remove it but Jesus Christ. He has perfect peace to give. And if ever you obtain it, you must receive it from his free love and bounty.

My brethren, do you give your assent to these truths? How do they appear to you? Do they not carry conviction along with them? Certainly they do, unless men be entirely blinded with sin. If they have convinced you, and you begin to desire to know the love of Christ, then turn from seeking happiness in creature comforts, where it cannot be found, and seek it in Jesus Christ, and you will find in him true solid bliss when he sets you as a seal upon his heart and as a seal upon his arm. But if you have not been convinced from what has been said, then turn to the world, and get its seal upon your hearts. If the world can make you happier than God can, idolize it. Serve it, as too many do, with every faculty of soul and body, and pay it that obedience which is due to God only. But did you ever consider who is the god of this world that ruleth in the children of disobedience? Is it not that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world? And what! would you be found, when you come to die, with the devil's seal upon you? Do you now deliberately choose to be marked for his, and to have your portion with him in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever? If there be any of you thus far deluded and infatuated, let me entreat you to read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel. You will there find a lively image of your present state. I pray God to make it the means of showing you your danger. The Lord gives a command to slay young and old, and to destroy the whole city: but first, one clothed in linen goes to set a mark upon the Lord's people; and they only were to be saved. You have not the

Lord's mark upon you; therefore, in the day of his fierce anger, his eye will not spare, neither will he have pity. Whenever the destroying angel is sent out, he has no power to hurt the servants of God, who are sealed; as you may read, Rev. vii. Four angels had a commission to hurt the earth and the sea; but they were not to execute it until the Lord's people were sealed: then they were to destroy, and spare not. Are not these awful scriptures? Have not they made you sensible of your present danger? May the Spirit of the living God apply them! Oh, may his grace now begin to work upon your hearts! Now may he put it into your minds, from a due sense of your wants, to seek a supply from the love of Christ, that you may receive profit from what I have to remark upon the second part of the text; *viz.*—The greatness of Christ's love.

But of this you can form no judgment unless you have seen your guilt and your misery, and found how much you stood in need of his love. It will appear great in proportion as you find your want of it, and greater as you experience it. In itself, it is divine and infinite. It partakes of the nature of its author. It is, like him, above all blessing and praise. If you try to take the dimensions of it, you will conclude with the apostle, that it surpasseth knowledge, yea, the knowledge of angels as well as of men: the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of it cannot be measured by any created being. Oh the height and depth of that love! which brought our divine Lord from the highest heavens to the lowest humiliation! Oh the length of that love! which reaches as far as the east is from the west; for so far hath he set our sins from us. Oh the breadth of it! which includes a great multitude, that no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. But although Christ's love be thus unspeakably great, and inconceivably divine, yet, until you feel the misery of sin, you will not think of applying to Christ for his love. But when guilt torments, death terrifies, the grave and hell appear to you in all their horrors, then you will think it a blessing indeed, if you could have that love in your hearts, which is able to cast out these fears. And the knowledge of Christ's love to you casteth out all fear: for his love has conquered all your enemies, and is now almighty to conquer them in you. For sin he has made an atonement, death he has subdued, and him that had the power of death: he is risen from the grave as the first fruits of the dead, and has opened the gate of everlasting life. Oh, beseech him, then, to let you share in that love which was stronger than death, mightier than the grave—whereby all his conquests shall be yours! When you are united to him in the bonds of love, he will make you more than conqueror. He will make your love triumphant, like his. He will so strengthen it, that many waters shall not be able to quench it, neither shall the floods be able to drown it. Neither distress nor persecution, neither life nor death, neither the pleasures of the world nor the temptations of the devil, shall be able to separate you from the love of Christ Jesus your Lord.

If you see your want of this love, seek, and you shall find it. The promise is, "They that seek me early shall find me." And if any of you have been seeking, and have not found, you may conclude that you have been seeking wrong; and have not followed the last part of the text; *viz.* seeking it as a free gift, which, with all your endeavours and pains, you cannot merit: for such is the free and inestimable love of Christ, that if a man would give all the substance of his house for this love, it would utterly be despised. If you had millions of worlds to give, they would be counted as nothing. He would reject you and your worthless bribes, as one said upon a like occasion, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the free gift of God was to be purchased with money." Not only all that thou hast, but also all that thou canst desire, is not to be compared with the love of Christ. Whatever can make the sinner happy in time, whatever can make him blessed in eternity, Christ's love is able to bestow, and does bestow, upon those who find their want of it, and who come, humbled under a sense of their wants, to ask it as a matter of free grace and bounty. It is to the glory of his love that he bestows it upon the unworthy. And if his good Spirit has enabled you to see your want of it, and you can ask it as an unworthy sinner, you will receive it. This is your only qualification—to acknowledge that

you do not deserve it. Go to the throne of his grace with this humble temper, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and the Lord Jesus will send you away filled with good things.

It is evident, then, from what has been said, that there is perfect happiness to be found in the love of our redeeming God. All that call themselves Christians profess their belief of this truth; but the generality of them act in direct opposition to their belief, and are seeking happiness where God has decreed it shall not be found. They try to find it in the world, but are disappointed; and, after many disappointments, they will not give over the search. Their great love for the world will not suffer them to turn their backs upon it, although it has deceived them so often. They are quite enamoured with its fancy goods, and place their whole hearts and affections upon its money, its pleasures, and its honours: these they pursue eagerly, and perhaps attain them: they have their heart's desire, and yet they are unhappy. What is the reason? Because these things cannot satisfy the wants of a sinful soul. Sin separated the soul from God: not only set them at a distance from each other, but also occasioned enmity between them. The law and justice of God are of purer eyes than to behold the least sin, and therefore he revealed his wrath from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men. And until his law and justice receive full satisfaction, God the Father will not appear reconciled, nor pardon the sinner, who cannot return to God with any love or confidence, and find happiness in him, until he believe that God is reconciled, and has pardoned him. Now, Jesus Christ is the only Saviour who has pardon of sin to give. His good Spirit can give the sinner the knowledge of the pardon of sin, and shed abroad in his heart all the comforts of God's pardoning love. Then he will know the truth of the description in the text. Christ's love will appear to him as it is there described. He will be able to take up the words, and to use them with the same spirit, with which they were spoken in the Song: for he is happy in the love of Christ, and can truly say, "I love him, because he first loved me, and gave himself for me."

Since these things are so, surely, my beloved brethren, you will not go away resolved still to seek happiness in the love of creature comforts. You cannot suppose that the world can make you happier than its almighty Creator and Saviour can. If you had it all in your possession, yet there are times when it could be of no service. What pleasure could it give you in sickness? How could it remove the torments of a guilty conscience? How could it keep off death, or take out its sting? How could it bring you any comfort, if your poor soul should appear with all its sins unpardoned at the judgment-seat of Christ? Alas! in these circumstances the world and the things of it cannot give relief. You know they cannot. And why, then, will you pursue them, since there is no happiness to be found in them, and the more you pursue them, the farther will they lead you from true happiness: Oh, turn from the world, then, leave it; follow its vain shadows no longer; nor disquiet yourselves in vain. No man was ever happy in the love of the world; but every man is happier than the world can make him who has only accepted the invitation, "Oh come, taste, and see how gracious the Lord Jesus is:" but he that has tasted, and seen, and is under the care and protection of Christ's love, he is completely happy, even in times of trial and trouble; because Christ is almighty to deliver; and when he does not deliver from affliction, he is able to sanctify it, and to make it work together for good to them that love him. And is not this a happy state? What sinner would not desire it, and what afflicted person would not pray for it? May He who is able to bring you into it, put it into all your hearts to seek it. Oh that he may send his good Spirit, and give every one of you earnest desires to have this scripture fulfilled in your own souls! May this be the language of every soul here present—Set me, blessed Saviour, as a seal upon thine heart, and as a seal upon thine arm. Let thy love and thy power act together for my salvation: for thy love is mightier than death, and stronger than the grave. Oh that I might share in these victories of thy love, the vehement ardour of which many waters could not quench, neither could the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house to buy this love, it would utterly be

contemned. I have nothing to purchase it with. Give it to me, Lord, as a free gift, and to the glory of the giver.

O dear Redeemer, send us away with these good desires in all our hearts, and cherish them, until we know that love of thine which passeth knowledge, which exceeds all that can be said of it upon earth, and will exceed all that can be said of it in heaven. There will be no end of singing its praises through eternity. Oh may it be your joy and happiness here in time to sing with grateful hearts the praises of redeeming love until Jesus take you to himself and put more love into your hearts, and fill your mouths with louder songs of praise to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the adorable Trinity in Unity; to whom may we all ascribe equal honour and glory, majesty and dominion, now, henceforth, and for evermore. *Amen* and *Amen*.

DISCOURSE XII.

CHAP. viii. ver. 14.

Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

THE church makes this her last request. She desires her beloved to hasten his coming, which under the Old Testament dispensation, referred to his coming in the flesh, as under the New it refers to his second coming. But the church of God, both in the Old Testament and the New, expected another coming of Christ; *viz.* his coming in grace. The believers knew that he was to come, and to abide with them, and not as a sojourner, but as an inhabitant, to dwell in their hearts by faith. This was promised them, and this they have always experienced. The words may with great propriety treat of the three advents of our Lord. And I will endeavour,

First, to explain them in their full sense, and then,

Secondly, To draw some practical observations from them.

The words were spoken before the coming of Christ in the flesh; and supposing they refer to it, they imply great haste and speed. The faithful would have Christ to hasten his coming in the swiftest manner; whereby they express the holy impatience of their affections, which could not endure delay. They longed to see the desire of all nations incarnate. It was their continual wish and prayer that they might see the day of Christ. Therefore upon the conclusion of the Song, they break off as it were abruptly, with this their last request, upon which their hearts were principally set,—"Make haste, my beloved."

This was the continual prayer of believers under the Old Testament, which they made, not from any doubt of God's faithfulness and truth, but from their earnest desire after the Saviour of the world. They were sensibly convinced of their great want of him. They found sin in themselves; they read in the law of the punishment due to sin, which the law had threatened, and justice was bound to inflict; and they knew that they could do nothing to make an atonement to law and justice: therefore they ardently prayed for the coming of the promised Lamb of God who was to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and to answer all the demands of law and justice. The first prophecy was sufficiently clear to be a ground for their prayers. God had declared that the seed of the woman—one born of a woman—should bruise the serpent's head, in which his poison lay, and thereby destroy the power which he had usurped over mankind. The types and services then instituted, which are in sum and substance the same that were afterwards recorded in the written law, tended to explain the first prophecy, and to keep it continually in remembrance. They served as a schoolmaster to lead men to Christ. From them it was certain that the Saviour would come and be made a sacrifice for sin; but the precise time of his coming was not made known in the first ages of the world. This gave men occasion to expect him in every age, until the fixed time of his coming was revealed. And, accordingly, we find the patriarchs before, and the prophets under, the law,

waiting with eager desires for his coming: As our Lord assured his apostles, Matt. xiii. 17: "Verily I say unto you, Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear these things which ye hear, and have not heard them." There were many prophets and righteous men in the church of God, as well before the written law as since, who desired to see God incarnate, and to hear the gracious words that should proceed out of his mouth. Jacob was one of these prophets and righteous men; and he expresses all their desires in his own: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Gen. xlix. 18. And the prophet Isaiah, speaking in his own name, and in the name of the faithful, says,—"In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." And there were always in the church some waiting for the promised consolation of Israel, and especially at the time of his appearing in the flesh; such as the just and devout Simeon, who, when the holy child Jesus was brought into the temple, took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." And this, my brethren, will be your happy case when your eyes see the salvation of God. When faith gives you a clear view of your interest in the salvation of Jesus Christ, then, whenever you die, you will depart in peace.

Thus the Old Testament saints desired Christ to hasten his coming in the flesh. They wanted to behold his day. They longed to see the great mystery of godliness opened and explained—God manifest in the flesh. In the fulness of time, according to their desires, he came. He visited us in great humility, and in the form of a servant; but he thought it not robbery to be equal with God: for he required the same faith in himself as in the Father: "Ye believe in God; believe also in me." John xiv. 1. He commanded the same divine honour to be paid to him: "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" John v. 23, for he is Jehovah, the self-existent God; John viii. 24, which whoever does not believe shall die in his sins. He supported these high claims by appealing to his miracles, which were God's testimony to the truth of his words. Hear his own argument upon this very subject. The Jews were going to stone him for saying that he was God. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." John x. 37, 38. He did all the works which the prophets had foretold the promised Immanuel should perform. And after he had fulfilled the scriptures of the Old Testament, had suffered all that law and justice required, and had completed the great work of salvation, he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. And we are now, according to his most true promise, waiting for his second coming. There is a great day, and not far off, when every eye shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. God had revealed this very early to his servants, the prophets: for Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of it; saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." In the New Testament we have the manner of our Lord's coming to execute judgment, with the process of the last day very particularly described. And it is the wish and prayer of every faithful soul that he would hasten this his glorious appearing, and accomplish the great things which are to go before it. When the blessed Jesus closes the volume of Revelation with this promise, "Surely I come quickly," the faithful reply, "*Amen.* Even so, come Lord Jesus." And daily is it in their prayers—Thy kingdom come. And they have good reason to desire it; because all that their Lord and Saviour has to do upon the earth will then be completed. The number of the elect will be perfected, and be will be admired in them. His enemies will be finally subdued. An end will be put to the reign of sin and Satan. There will be no more death. Whatever robbed our redeeming God of his glory will be destroyed. Oh how greatly, then, is this

second coming of our Lord to be desired by all his faithful followers and servants, who are described in scripture by this character—that they love his appearing. They love it first for his sake, because he will then be glorified in his saints, he will then be glorified for the great glory which he will bestow upon them; and they love it also for their own sakes, because then all their wishes and desires will be fulfilled, when they shall see their beloved Saviour face to face. They will have no more prayers or requests to make. When that great day is come, there will be no more complaints, no more wants or necessities, sorrow and sighing will flee away for ever. Our warfare will be ended, our victory completed. Our crowns shall shine upon our heads with never-fading lustre; our palms of victory shall be ever green. How exceedingly great this happiness will be we cannot fully comprehend at present. However this one circumstance heightens every thing said of it in scripture; namely, that it will be eternal. When we have ascended from judgment with our Lord, he will admit us into his kingdom of glory. After this meeting we shall part no more; but shall ever be with the Lord, praising and adoring his perfections, and being happy in the enjoyment of them to all eternity. And is not all this happiness earnestly to be desired by them who have received through faith the earnest of their inheritance? And will it not be much upon their hearts to pray him to hasten his coming? And will not they who love his appearing pray for it with great fervency? Our church is very earnest in her prayers: for she teaches us, in the Burial Service, to be continually praying to him, "that it would please him, of his gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom." And he has promised to hear and to answer these prayers: for when he is describing, in St. Matthew, the tribulation of the last days, which shall be greater than any since the beginning of the world to that time, he says that "for the elects' sake these days shall be shortened." *Amen.* So be it, Lord Jesus.

My brethren, when you hear of our Lord's second coming, how does it affect you? Do you love to think of the day of his great glory? Do you wish and pray for it? Does the solemnity of it strike no terror into your consciences? Is all peace and joy within when you hear of the suddenness of his coming, and of the general surprise it will be to a careless world? Do you now find no fear if the last trump should this moment sound, and you should lift up your eyes, and see the God of glory coming in the clouds of heaven, attended with all his holy angels? Could you look up with joy, knowing that your redemption draweth nigh? Is your conscience so purged from dead works, that it would not be alarmed if the air that we breathe, being on fire, should be dissolved, and the elements should melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, should be burnt up? Are you prepared to draw near the judgment seat with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience? When you meditate upon the solemn process of the last day as described by the Judge himself, can you suppose yourself to be in the midst of this awful scene, and your state ready to be determined to all eternity? and have you no fearful apprehensions about your salvation? If you have none, may he who delivered you from them strengthen and establish your faith, that you may daily love our Lord, and love his appearing more and more. But if guilty fear does arise in your heart when you think of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour at the last day, this proves that all is not right in your own soul. There is a coming of Christ in grace which you have not yet experienced: for if you had, it would have given you that love which casteth out all tormenting fear. If Christ had come, and manifested himself to you as your Saviour; if he had awakened you, had pardoned you freely, and given you the witness of the Spirit in your heart, enabling you to look upon God as your reconciled Father, Christ as your Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as your guide and comforter, then you could have no reason to fear. And this coming of Christ is the most to be desired, because without this you do not receive the graces and blessings of his first coming in the flesh, and therefore are not prepared for his second coming to judgment. What he did and suffered in the flesh is not imputed unto us for righteousness until it be applied and appropriated. The Holy Spirit

must come and show us our interest in it; he must give us present salvation from the pollution, and the guilt, and the dominion of sin; and we must know and experience this by true faith before the fear of Christ's coming to judgment can be taken out of the conscience. But when Christ thus dwells in the heart by faith, then, being interested in all the graces of his first coming, we may wait for the blessings of his second coming with hopes full of immortality. Therefore,

My brethren, above all things seek the experience of Christ's coming to you in grace: for when you once know and love him as your Saviour, you cannot fear him as your judge: but from the sense of his love to you, you will be able, with the faithful in the text, to call him your beloved, and to pray for his speedy coming, that he may put all his enemies under his feet. When they say, "Make haste, my beloved," this implies that there was mutual love between them. The soul was made sensible of Christ's love to it: "For we love him," says the apostle John, "because he first loved us." And when you have scripture evidence of his first loving you, then you can with true faith take up the church's words, and say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." To know that he is yours, is the same thing as to know whatever he has is yours: for, by being interested in him, you have a property in all his promises, graces, and blessings, in time and in eternity. This is the blessed state of believers. And do you not desire, my brethren, to be in it? Is it not happiness indeed to be freed from the fear of death and judgment—nay more, to be able to pray for the coming of Christ, and to love his appearing? What can be more desirable than to know that the almighty Judge is your loving Saviour, who, when he comes at the last day, will make you completely blessed, both in body and soul? May God put it into all your hearts to desire this; and may he give you faith to pray, in the words of the text, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or a young hart,"—like them in swiftness and speed, for which they are remarkable. It is said of Asahel the son of Zeruiah, that he was as light of foot as a wild roe; and the Gadites who came to David at Ziklag, are celebrated for being as swift as roes upon the mountains. With all this speed would the faithful have Christ to hasten his coming. They had no stronger idea of the greatest speed than what they took from the swiftness of a wild roe; and therefore by this they express the fervent desires of their souls after his speedy coming. He heard their prayers, and he will answer them. He gave them many promises in the Old Testament of his coming in glory to judge the world, and many more in the New. In his last words, with which he shuts up the volume of Revelation, he leaves us this sweet and comfortable promise—"Surely I come quickly." Here we have his promise: he will come quickly; and confirmed by a solemn asseveration: surely, and surely what his truth hath promised, nothing shall be able to hinder his omnipotence from fulfilling: for, yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. And because he seems to tarry, therefore the unbeliever takes occasion to reflect upon the faithfulness of God, and the careless sinner sinks deeper into carnal security; but both these sorts of persons may read their condemnation in the third chapter of the second epistle of Peter, in which he foretels that there should come, in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? We see no signs of it: for since the fathers fell asleep, all things go on as they did from the beginning of the creation. To this the apostle replies, first, by saying, It is wilful ignorance to maintain that the world has suffered no change since the creation: for was it not once destroyed by a deluge of water? And, secondly he answers, that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. What these men call slackness, is an act of mercy. The judge only waits till the time fixed in the counsel of God be finished, till the number of the elect be perfected: and then shall the end come. His delay may seem long to us, who measure time by days, and months, and years; but with the Lord, a thousand years are but as one day. There is no time in eternity. What seems long to us, who are but of yesterday, is with the Lord speedy: for he that is truth, and cannot lie, says, Surely I come quickly. The longer he has delayed, the sooner he will come: and therefore, my brethren, you should be the

more prepared. If you think his delay long, this should hasten you in your preparation: because every moment brings his coming nearer. No one dare affirm that he shall not live to see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. If this may be, and every one of us may live to see it come to pass, oh what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! What diligence should we give to make our calling and election sure! Ought we not to have a clear knowledge of our interest in the Judge, and to be assured by faith of his being our Saviour, that we may love his appearing, and pray for it, as the faithful did in the text? They finished their prayer, and closed the book, with entreating him to come speedily, and to give them more experience of his love: they desired to have, daily, more proofs of his being their complete Saviour, by his acting in each of his anointed offices for them, and for their salvation, as their prophet, their priest, and their king. This is, I think, the meaning of the last words—"Upon the mountains of spices." In our language, we apply the word mountain to the highest hills, and we generally fix the idea of barrenness to it: but the scripture applies it to hills of no great height, and to the most fruitful hills, such as Carmel, and Sharon, and Gilead, upon which grew the spices here mentioned. In the 30th of Exodus, we have a particular description of these aromatic spices. Moses was commanded to take myrrh, cinnamon, sweet calamus, and cassia, and to mix them up with olive oil, to make a composition that would diffuse its fragrant odours without the help of fire. The use of this holy ointment was to anoint the tabernacle itself and all its vessels, that they might be holy unto the Lord: and it was able to consecrate the high priest, that he might minister in holy things: and it was strictly forbidden in the law to use it to any other purpose, upon the penalty of death. This holy anointing was to represent what was to be in Christ, and what was to flow to us from him. It was the type and figure of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which was poured upon him without measure, to consecrate him to the high offices of prophet, priest, and king over the people of God. He is their prophet, to enlighten the blindness of their understanding, and to lead them into all saving truth; their priest, to take away the pollution and guilt of sin; and their king to destroy in them the dominion of sin, and to carry on the divine life in their souls, here in grace, and hereafter in glory. The faithful in the Old Testament expected him in these gracious offices, for which he was to be qualified by the unction from the Holy One; and therefore they made it a matter of their prayers that he would hasten his coming in his three office characters, which they express by that holy anointing, whereby he was constituted and ordained to these offices.

The meaning of the words, from what has been said, appears to be this. The faithful finish this sweet portion of scripture with a prayer. They had experienced so much of Christ's love, that their hearts were entirely set upon further communion; and therefore they beg of him to hasten his coming. In the Old Testament they mean his coming in the flesh; in the New we mean his coming to judgment: but, both to them and us, there is another coming. Christ must come and dwell in our hearts by faith, that we may receive the benefits of his first coming in the flesh, and be prepared for his second coming in glory: for until we have by faith a clear view of our interest in him, how can we take up the words of the text and say, Make haste, O thou beloved Jesus, and for the elects' sake shorten these days of sin and blasphemy. Why is thy chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? Oh! come with all the swiftness of the fleetest roe, or wild deer, to fulfil whatever remains of scripture not completed; especially, come to fulfil what is written of the sacred offices to which thou wast anointed, and by which thou art to make us an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto God. Thus come, Lord Jesus, as our prophet and priest, and set up thy kingdom of grace in every one of our hearts, that we may love thy appearing, and pray thee to hasten thy kingdom of glory.

Upon this state of the doctrine there are two practical truths offered to our serious consideration.

First, the prayer for Christ's coming. And

Secondly, the reason upon which the prayer was grounded.

And First, As to his coming at the last day, it is as certain as that he came in the flesh in the fulness of time. From the certainty of the fact, the faithful were led to pray for it. And can you, my brethren, join in their prayer? Do you desire from your hearts that Christ should soon come in all his glory to judgment? Are you preparing and looking out for it as an event that may not be far off? If you are, then you are safe. But if you are not, examine carefully what is the reason. Why cannot you pray along with the faithful for Christ's speedy coming to judgment? Surely you do not doubt of the fact? That he will come to judge the world, is as certain as that he did come, at the fixed time, to judge the Jewish nation: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." The matter of fact, upon scripture principles, is undeniably clear and certain. Why, then, are you not so prepared for it as to make it the subject of your prayers? Is it because you put it at a great distance, and therefore think yourselves safe? Consider attentively what the scripture says upon this point. Our Lord has given us several marks and signs of his coming, by which we might know as certainly when it was at hand as we could know, when the fig-tree puts forth her green figs, that summer is nigh. There were to be wars and rumours of wars, pestilences, earthquakes in divers places, very little true faith left upon the earth, and yet as great security among careless sinners as there was in the days of Noah, when the flood came and swept them all away. Do you think these cannot be the forerunners of our Lord's speedy coming, because there always have been such things in the world? But when all these signs are at once upon the earth, and in a manner they never were before, then they become loud calls to an immediate preparation. Were there ever greater wars, or more rumours of wars? Has not an uncommon pestilence raged among the cattle for several years in this and in other countries? Were there ever such earthquakes, so universal, and of so long continuance, as have been for some years past? And does not the present state of the world, as to religion, greatly resemble our Lord's description of the men upon whom that day shall come unawares as a thief in the night?

And when could the account which St. Paul gives us in several of his epistles, of the men of the latter times, be more true than it is at present? Have they not the name and form of Christianity without the power of it? Are they not worldly minded, sunk into carnal security, and so entirely influenced by the love of pleasure, that the love of God, and of the things of God, is not only waxed cold, but quite frozen up? Was there ever any age wherein our Lord's words could be more strictly fulfilled? "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth?" By these signs our Lord is alarming a sinful world with notices of his speedy coming; and if sinners are not at all alarmed, but continue still secure in their sins, this is a scripture proof that he will soon come as a thief in the night and surprise them: for when they shall say, "Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them, and they shall not escape."

But still you do not see the signs of his coming so clearly as to be convinced of the necessity of being immediately prepared. If it be at all necessary to be prepared, it is certainly necessary to be prepared immediately: for you cannot be sure, at any time, that he will not come; and therefore you should be at all times ready for his coming. Suppose he should come in a day that ye look not for him; what would your eternal condition be? What if he should surprise you in your sins; have you no apprehension about your danger? Who amongst you could dwell with the devouring fire? Who amongst you could dwell with the everlasting burnings? And suppose he should not come; yet, if he send death to surprise you, it is the same thing. If you die unpardoned, you are lost for ever: for it is written, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." So that, put our Lord's coming as far off as you please, yet you cannot put death off. And there is the same preparation necessary for the one as for the other. You must be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; you must be justified and sanctified, before you are fit either to meet death or judgment. And if you have no knowledge of Christ's being your Saviour, it is the same thing to you as if there was no Saviour: for if you are not united by faith to Christ, he is no Christ to you, according to the saying

of the first reformers, that "An unapplied Christ is no Christ." Therefore, my beloved brethren, if you have any real love for your own souls, if you indeed prefer everlasting joys to endless torments, seek for pardon and peace from the hands of Jesus Christ, who has them to give; that, having received them from him, you may be able with true faith to use the prayer in the text, and for the same reason the faithful here used it; namely, from your experience of your interest in Christ; which is the second practical point in the text I was to apply.

They pray to Christ to hasten his coming; which they earnestly requested, because they had clear evidence of his being their loving Saviour. He first loved them, and made them sensible of his love; therefore they loved him. And having a sure interest in the present graces of his salvation (for they were in possession, and had actual enjoyment of them) they knew that they should at his second coming share in the blessings of his eternal kingdom: for which reason they offered up to him the prayer of faith, requesting him to come quickly—Make haste, my beloved, and may we soon see thee manifest in the flesh, making an atonement for sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness: and when thou hast, by obeying, suffering, dying, and rising again, fulfilled the law and the prophets, oh hasten thy second coming. Let all things be forwarded that are to go before it. Finish the number of thine elect, Jews and Gentiles, and then come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Now, my brethren, do you pray thus for Christ's second coming? Can you make it, do you make it, the daily subject of your prayers? Being assured that Jesus is your Saviour, have you no fear of him as your Judge? Are you so entirely delivered from fear, that you love his appearing, as the day of the Lord's great glory, when he will be glorified in the destruction of all his enemies, and glorified much more in the eternal salvation of all his saints?

Perhaps some of you may think that it savours of enthusiasm for a man to pretend to be so certain of Christ's love as to pray for his coming to judgment. Let us hear, then, what the scripture says. The faithful in the text desire Christ to make haste; and upon this motive they ground their prayer, that he was their beloved: but they could not have urged him to make haste for this reason, unless they had been certain of their interest in him. If he had not been their beloved, they could not have made their hopes of meeting him soon the subject of their prayers; but every one could say for himself, "My beloved is mine, and I am his:" and knowing that they were his, and belonged to him—knowing this from the work of grace which was in them, from the abiding witness of the Spirit, and from the long and sweet communion which they had enjoyed with their beloved Jesus—they therefore prayed him to make haste—to hasten his first and second coming. And if this be enthusiasm, it is not peculiar to this portion of scripture. It runs through the whole volume as well as through the Song. All the patriarchs, as well as Abraham, desired to see Christ's day. Moses prayed earnestly for it, and was honoured with the sight of it, as Abraham was. God showed it to them in a vision; but he did not vouchsafe the same to many prophets, and kings, and righteous men, although they earnestly desired to see it. The Psalms and the prophetical writings are full of petitions to Christ, praying him to come to the salvation of his people; and the New Testament abounds with the like petitions. It is said of believers, that they love their Lord's appearing: they love it and make it the subject of their prayers, because they know it will be a happy event for them. Daily are they looking up to him, and praying, "thy kingdom come," and beseeching him, in the words of our church, "shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom."

Thus, it is so far from being enthusiasm to love Christ's appearing, that it is one of the plain truths of scripture, clearly taught and strongly enforced in numerous passages both of the Old Testament and of the New; and it is a doctrine received by our church, and made use of in her liturgy. And certainly, my brethren, you will not oppose a truth confirmed by so many proofs! This would be acting a very irrational part, and would be a clear sign of your being under great guilt: for it would prove you to be without the least sense of that love which you oppose. If you had ever seen your want of that love, had ever been seeking it, or had ever tasted of it, you could not deny there is such a thing

as loving Christ, because he first loved you. This is a received truth in scripture. In the Song it is taken for granted throughout; and in the New Testament it is expressly asserted; "We have known, say some, the love that God hath to us." And another declares, "Jesus Christ loved me, and gave himself for me." And we may still know this by the very same means by which they knew it; *viz.* by the Holy Ghost's shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts. Until he shed it abroad in your hearts you cannot join the faithful in the text, and pray with them for Christ's coming; because, if you love him not, how can you love his appearing? You cannot call him your beloved; and therefore you have no interest in him. Consider and examine whether this be a desirable state to live in, and to die in. What is it to be without Christ? Is it not to be aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, to have no hope, and to be without God in the world? This is the scripture account of your dangerous condition. And does not it alarm you? If it does, fly to Christ, and he will give you to taste of his pardoning love. If it does not, may he send his good Spirit to convince you what it is to be without Christ, that you may feel the misery of it in time, and therefore may seek to be happy with him in eternity.

If, then, the same spirit be in you which was in the faithful in the text, you will be able to take up their words, and to speak them with their faith. You will have such a clear view of your interest in the beloved Jesus, that the thoughts of his coming soon to judgment will be matter of joy and delight; and this will furnish you with the best comment upon the Song. The experience of Christ's love makes it plain and easy: for he that has this love in his heart will not be much at a loss to understand what is here written of it. He is not like a novice, who begins to learn the first principles of some art or science; but he is a great proficient. He has been taught of God, and has received a practical and experimental knowledge of the subject of this book. It treats of the believer's happiness in being united to Christ; and he is united to Christ, and finds himself happy in that union: for he knows the love which Christ has to his soul; and he has received many clear scripture marks and evidences of it. The Holy Spirit has shed abroad the love of Christ in his heart; and he loves Christ, because he knows Christ first loved him. He loves God the Father, who is now his reconciled Father, and he loves and delights to do his will. He loves the Lord's day, his ordinances, his people, and, in short, he loves every thing that God loves. He has indeed in his heart that love of which this book treats; and his own experience daily opens and explains it so clearly, as if it had been written for his particular use, and was a copy of God's dealings with his soul. He finds that nearness to God which is here described. He has much sweet communion with him in prayer. In time of temptation, or affliction, he can go boldly to the throne of grace. Faith gives him boldness and access with confidence: for he is assured that, whatever he asks in his Saviour's name, he shall receive. When he hears or reads the word, he can mix faith with it; and he is enabled to grow thereby. And when he goes to the Lord's supper, he finds that Christ is still present at his own table, and makes himself known in breaking of bread. He finds a nearness to Christ, and enjoys sweet fellowship with him in all the ordinances. He lives in his presence, is led by his Spirit, and partakes of his comforts. In short, he is united to Christ intimately and vitally, as a member of the body is to the head, or as the branches are to the vine, or as the bread is to the eater, or as the building is to the foundation: for under these, and several such like images, the scripture describes the union there is between Christ and the believer. Our church, speaking of it, says, That believers are one with Christ, and he with them; that they dwell in Christ, and Christ in them. Surely, then, they that are thus closely united to Christ will know the most of this book, and will be the best commentators on it: for it is not a sealed book to them. The subject-matter is to them plain and open. Daily experience gives them clearer views of its sweetness and fulness; and every step they advance in the divine life affords them fresh occassion to bless and praise God for this comfortable portion of his holy word.

My brethren, if you are united to Christ in the bonds of love, you know that

these things are true: but if you have not his love in your heart, nor desire it, you are not fit to read the Song: for you cannot understand it. A deaf man is as good a judge of a fine piece of music as you are of a treatise upon that love of which you never had a taste. The Song is a book of experience, describing Christ's love to his people, and the happiness they have in the sense of his love: but if you have no sense of it, how can you understand what is here written concerning it? If you should take it up and read it, having never had any fellowship with the Father nor the Son by the bond of the Spirit, it will appear to you an unintelligible piece of jargon. The English translation would be as dark and mysterious as the original Hebrew, which you do not understand: for it is a sealed book until the Holy Spirit open its meaning; but all becomes plain and clear when he sheds abroad in the heart that love of which it treats; and the more he gives you to taste of the love of Christ, the plainer and sweeter will the book grow in your esteem.

My Christian friends and brethren, you know these things to be true from your own experience. You set a great value upon this sweet portion of scripture, and desire to see the depths and heights of it: they will open more fully to your view if you pray for more love and nearer communion with Christ. And if any of you, my brethren, have been prevailed upon to seek for the happy experience of Christ's love, you are ready to join your hearts with mine to pray to him for a blessing on these discourses. And as to you who have not been stirred up to seek, you stand in great need of our prayers; and we will offer them up for you. May he that heareth prayer hear and answer!

We humbly beseech thee, O thou God of love, to bring into the way of truth all those who have erred and are deceived concerning this portion of thy divine word. Remove all their prejudices. Show the natural man, the ridiculer, and the unbeliever, that they want the love of which it treats. Convince them, blessed Jesus, that thy love can make them happy, and nothing else can. Let them feel their guilt and their danger, while the love of earthly and sensual enjoyments hinders their seeking for thy spiritual and heavenly joys. And may thy good Spirit shed abroad the love of God in the hearts of all those who are seeking it, that they may find this portion of scripture verified in their own souls, and daily fulfilled in their own experience. Oh that we may all know more of the love of God, and taste and see how gracious the Lord is. May we enjoy that fellowship and communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ which will explain to our understandings and apply to our hearts all the comforts of this divine treatise. So be it, Lord Jesus, to the praise of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah; to whom the church militant and triumphant gives equal honour, and worship, and glory, now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen*.

LETTERS

WRITTEN BY THE

REV. WILLIAM ROMAINE, A.M.

TO THE HON. AND REV. W. B. C.

LETTER I.

June 15, 1782.

My dear Friend.—Our Lord has been showing you some tokens of his singular regard for you. Whom he loveth, he takes pains with. He has been trying you with his rod: the trial on his part was altogether love, and graciously intended for your improvement: "I will feed them, says the good shepherd, with the rod."—Strange food to reason and sense, but rendered truly nourishing to faith. It learns to feel what sin, exceeding sinful sin, is. The smart says, "Sin deserves ten thousand times more than this;" the smart continues, "Jesus, Lord, thy will be done; only let faith and patience have their perfect work, that I may love thee for mortifying the life of sense:" the disorder abates—"O dear Saviour, keep me humble and thankful, that I may so cleave to thee with full purpose of heart, as to be dying daily to other objects, and be more alive to thee. As the pain drove me to thee, may the removing it keep me nearer to thee, so that I may practically learn to set the Lord always before me." These and many other improvements, I hope, followed your late visitation. It was sent to yield you the peaceable fruits of righteousness; yea, a harvest of blessings. May they be rich and ripe to the glory of the Giver!

These sentiments were upon my mind, and I could not help sending them to you, although my writing was upon another occasion. A friend of mine offered, last year, to bring me to R——; but, as we did not return to London, we refused his favour: this year we accept it. I am thankful for your great assistance to the Bible Society. If it be quite agreeable to you that I should once more recommend that blessed book in your pulpit, I am ready. We wait for your answer, and for your fixing a Sunday: the sooner the better for us, if convenient for you. Mrs. R. desires kind remembrance. I am, with brotherly love in our common Lord, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER II.

Brislington, Sept. 3, 1783.

Dear Friend and Brother.—Mrs. Romaine desired me to convey the enclosed to you, with her respects to Mrs. C.; with which I very gladly complied, that I might have an opportunity of acknowledging your great kindness to me during the long visit which I paid you at R——. You may continue the favour,

though we be absent, by daily remembrance of me in your prayers. I have nothing beyond these to ask of any one; and I am particularly happy in believing that I have many (Mr. C. among them) who interest themselves for me in this way. Do your best; be fervent; continue instant; persevere: you will not soon get out of my debt.

I have just finished my reading of the Bible for 1783. It has been a season of great teaching. I never went through it with more delight or with more profit. My soul has found it more precious than gold, and it is really sweeter than honey. But still I see much before me to be learned and to be experienced. I do not doubt of the promise being fulfilled to me, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; but I am seeking and waiting for its being engraven deeper in my heart, and more fairly copied out in my life. Oh that the Lord, the Spirit, may cast you and me into the mould of the word, that we may take the impression of every truth, and receive it in the love of it. I have put down my observations on this year's reading, and perhaps you may see them the next time we meet.

Mrs. R. with cordial respects to you and Mrs. C. and to our common friend Mrs. T. joins

W. Romaine.

LETTER III.

Nov. 29, 1783.

My dear Friend.—I have been out of town this week, and could not take earlier notice of your letter. If I may advise, I would by no means employ any body out of R. Many, many, reasons offer themselves to me. As it is quite necessary to enlarge the church, begin in faith and in the prayer of faith. As to the money, it is forthcoming. I have not had an opportunity to mention it to any body, but you need not doubt of its being raised. Get your plan and your estimate, and then communicate it to your friends. Do me the honour to put me down for one of your subscribers and collectors; and, when the gallery is finished, send for me, and I will consecrate it for you. At present, I will follow your design with my prayers, that the great head of the church would approve of it and bless it. Every good wish to you and your partner. Remember us to our old friend Mrs. T., whose heart rejoices with mine to see St.—— so highly favoured. I am, with great truth, yours, in the best bonds,

W. Romaine.

LETTER IV.

Dec. 5, 1783.

My dear Friend.—With this comes Mr. L.; such a man as you want—able and faithful: I have proved him. When you prove him, you will say the same. I do not recommend him for an experienced Christian; but he is worth a thousand of the professors of this day. Go on and prosper in this and in all your other works. We did not forget you yesterday morning, noon, or night. There is a union which sanctifies all others. As the head quickens all the members, so our Head puts his life into all our enjoyments, and he makes our sweets sweeter, and our bitter sweet; only we do not love the taste, or else he would make the bitterest sweetest. When we leave him out of any thing, it is well if we feel it empty or displeasing; and so for wife, children, servants, parish, indeed for every thing, we must put him in, if we get any good out of it. My congratulations have been made to him, and my prayers also, that he would bless your connexion, and turn your water into wine. You know what that is: and it is his standing miracle.

Our true love, Mrs. Romaine's and mine, to Mrs. C and yourself. Remember us to Mrs. T. She is a wonderful monument of mercy. To dine at the vicarage! Well—what cannot our God do? Pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER V.

Blackfriars, Dec. 23, 1783

Dear Sir.—By favour of Mr. Neucatre, I send my hearty wishes for your meeting the birth of Christ with the spirit of the angels. It was the triumph of their joy that Christ the Lord was born; and yet he was not so nearly related to them as to you and me. But they thought according to God's thoughts; and, as far as they understood them, they admired and adored his inestimable love in taking our nature into union with himself. What a miracle of philanthropy! "Will God in very deed dwell with men" on the earth? O yes! though it puzzled Solomon: yet God's counsels of old are now faithfulness and truth. The Word is incarnate. Glory be to God in the highest! the Peacemaker is come to the earth, and has demonstrated the delight of his Father towards men. Blessed be his witness—that you believe it: blessed be his grace—that you enjoy it: thanks be to his holy name—that you preach it. May your meditations upon it, and your present preaching of it, warm your heart with more than angel's joy. Try to get a note above them; I am sure you ought, notwithstanding they were ἐν ὑψίστοις. I am aiming at it this Christmas, but have not yet attained. And this makes up some of my best praise—what he is to me—and what I am to him. I see and am under such infinite obligations, that I am willing to be in his debt for ever and ever. Even then I shall pay him nothing; or if it be worth any thing, it will be all his own. All my fresh springs of glory, as well as grace, shall be in him.

I could not stop my pen; for he is precious. I hope and pray for his favour on the design, and his blessing on the use of the intended gallery. You must have a faculty—The order of vestry must be sent to Salisbury—Mind, a unanimous vestry. I shall not move in the subscription till matters are settled. But think it not a doubtful point; the money may be easily raised. God bless Mrs. C. this Christmas with his light and his love. I do not forget your neighbour, Mrs. T. I shall not, while she is in the reach of prayer: and when that is done I shall praise him for ever. I entreat you to remember me in your best moments. When the *King* smiles on you, ask a favour for

W. Romaine.

LETTER VI.

March 5, 1784.

My very dear Friend.—I have two letters of yours before me; one relating to the gallery, which I have much at heart, and shall not be less earnest in collecting for it, although I have at the onset met with two repulses. However, these things only make me the more earnest to do what I can. On some good day, when the Lord smiles, I will go out in his name, and I hope his work will prosper in my hands.

Mr. H. may wait on me whenever he gets the seals: I shall think it an honour to frank him on your recommendation. L—— is a favoured place, in which the Lord delighteth to dwell. He has made himself known there for more than thirty years, to my knowledge. Mr. C. S. was there, and Mr. W. L. was curate there before he came to me. The good seed was sown, and took root. May Mr. H. be a successful labourer, and the Lord's harvest prosper in his hands!

We have begun our hour of prayer from eight to nine on Sunday evenings. I dread what is coming upon this land: I have long read it in the word, and now I see it about to take effect. If nobody stand in the gap, vengeance will find its way. We have pleaded and prevailed. If we cannot this time, and the measure of our iniquities be full, it will however be well with them who are on the side of the Lord and his Christ. Ezekiel ix. None of them who had the mark perished. May we mourn and pray for our sins and others—sigh for the dishonour offered to our almighty Jesus, and to the Spirit Jehovah, and to the

word of his grace. Let us do what we can in the way of prayer: and may He who sitteth upon the throne hear and answer my prayers for you and yours especially. Remember

W. Romaine.

LETTER VII.

July 30, 1784.

My very dear Friend.—I received yours by the hand of Mr. L. My service was ready to assist you at the Lock, Aug. 1: the disappointment was not owing to me. Whenever the gallery opens, I hope our Lord will be there to fill it with his glory.

I wish you joy of a troublesome job, from which the Bishop has delivered you. Should it not put your parish in mind of a new church?

We purpose on Monday to set out for the North; in all probability for the last time. I have three sisters alive, all in years as well as myself; and we are to have a family meeting, to take our leave, final as to this life. It has brought a great solemnity upon my spirit; and it would be too much for my feelings if I had not all the reason in the world to believe that our next meeting will be in glory. Mr. Whitfield used often to put me in mind how singularly favoured I was. He had none of his family converted; and my father, and mother, and three sisters were like those blessed people—"And Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;" and, as they loved him again, so do we. I hope to return about the middle of September, and to visit you soon after.

I am, with Mrs. Romaine's, and my best wishes to Mrs. C., your friend and brother, in our common Lord,

W. Romaine.

The Prince of Peace was very much honoured in this city yesterday. I scarce ever felt so much of his presence in ordinances any day of my life. There was also great outward reverence paid by all, except Quakers.

LETTER VIII.

Monday Evening, Dec. 13, 1784.

My dear Friend.—I have been waiting a long time for news out of Yorkshire relating to the Sunday-schools. I can give you now a full and satisfactory account of them. They have been chiefly useful in the trading parts, where there are great numbers of the manufacturers' children employed, as soon as they can do anything, all the week, but let loose to mischief and wickedness all the Lord's day. It was with a view to prevent this, and also to instruct them in the way of salvation, for their own sakes, and for their parents, and for the public, that several persons, laity as well as clergy, tried to get them together, and teach them to read, write, and learn the catechism. The Lord God has marvellously favoured the plan. He has inclined vast numbers of children to come; the parents in general are thankful; and the schoolmasters and mistresses have given great satisfaction. I know not of any thing more promising for the rising generation, especially as it is made an indispensable part of their Sunday's employment, that they attend the church regularly with their masters and mistresses. Mr. T. informs me of one good effect; that it has been the happy occasion of many conversions, by bringing poor people to see their children at church, who never before came to any place of worship. Others have also been won over to let their children attend by the little presents made to the neighbours' children, and by seeing their improvement in reading and writing. If you are disposed to do something in this way, you have my prayers for success.

I hear you stay Christmas at R. May it be a season of much thankfulness as they sang "glad tidings of great joy." This Advent has brought forth

(Isaiah xl. 1, 2, 3, &c.) verses, to my unspeakable joy. I have trod upon John the Baptist's heels, and have been favoured with some of his views of the Lamb of God. It is a most delightful portion of God's word. Yesterday we had verses 9, 10: "God incarnate, almighty to save." Our next subject is, verse 11. "God incarnate, the good Shepherd, whose love is almighty to bless them." Our kindest respects to Mrs. C. and to yourself. Remember us to Mrs. T. Do not, I charge you, do not cease to pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER IX.

Nov. 26, 1785.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.—Methinks I heard a voice, saying, "Weep not for me; but weep for yourselves." However, I could not help weeping for our loss, although we are certain she is entered into rest. The church and people in R—— have a great loss, and none more than yourself; for she really was a mother to you in love, in every good office, and in continual prayer for your person and for your labours. The poor will feel their loss. Her long experience made her wise in the things of God, by which she could teach the ignorant with a meekness quite her own. Her natural temper, sanctified by grace, enabled her frequently to check the spreading of furious zeal and wild separations; both which have had their day, but, I thank God, seem to be dying away at R——. Though we know not the effect of her prayers, yet her Lord is our Lord: he still reigneth; and to him I will make my supplication. He will hear me often before his throne on the same errand. For many years his interest at St. G——'s has been upon my heart. Still I feel it warm: and I hope it will be warmer. When you speak in public upon the occasion of her death, I will be praying him to make it the means of giving life to many dead sinners. The Lord Jesus bless your preaching that day to all who hear it! My feelings are such, that I am sure I could not be able to speak upon the subject. My eyes are running down with tears while I am writing; I do not resist his will: Oh no; I kiss the rod, but I do feel the smart, and shall for some time. God sanctify it; may the Comforter take of the things of Jesus, and with them help us to improve this visitation. May Mrs. C—— profit much, and all of us learn that there is no blessing upon earth but living in the Lord; and then great will be our blessedness when we come to die in the Lord. Mrs. R—— very heartily joins, and begs to be remembered with

Yours,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER X.

Jan. 19, 1795.

MY GOOD FRIEND AND BROTHER.—You will please to accept this little book as a small token of my great love for you. If any thing in it appear wrong, or that might be improved, it would be a favour to me if you would mark it; and, if what is right agrees with your experience, thank our divine teacher the Holy Spirit for leading me into the truth, and for keeping me in it, through such a long life, and for the most blessed prospect opened to me when this life shall be ended. May he be with you, and bless you in all your labours, for his glory, according to the warmest wishes of the heart of

W. ROMAINE.

Our love to Mrs. C.

LETTER XI.

Feb. 14, 1795.

My very dear Friend.—I have sent a parcel of two hundred invitations, one for yourself and the other for the printing-office: and I follow them with my prayers that they may be the means of bringing some to pray who do not use it, and some who do, to pray with more faith. The cloud over us is very dark; but prayer can pierce through it, and enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts. If any good is done, I must thank you for it; because it was from your mentioning it to my son that I set about it.

I am really obliged to you for the offer of your assistance. If you sleep in London, and would preach at St. Dunstan's, Thursday, the 26th, it would be a great favour. If inconvenient then, might I expect you at my own church, on the 24th. I cannot desire both. Please to let me know.

I thank my God; for of him cometh our harmony of sentiments and experience. May he confirm us and establish us yet more and more, that our preaching and living may spread the fame of our Jesus: and you may be blessed in doing both—after he has discharged me. Our respects to Mrs. C., and with great truth, I am, your friend in the Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XII.

To Sir R. H., Bart.

Nov. 18, 1791.

Honoured Sir.—I do not know that you are returned to England: but if you are, I am sure you have seen enough abroad to endear your native country to you more than ever. It is at present the favourite of Heaven. Our privileges as free men, and as Christians, set us far above the nations of the earth. It is my office to plead with the Lord and Governor of church and state, that we may not be suffered to sin away our distinguishing blessings. I have some interest with a very great Prince, and I am often mentioning you to him, and recommending your case: for he delighteth in mercy. May you know him more than I do, and love him, and delight in him, and every day find him a more, still more, precious Jesus. Oh how marvellous should he be in your eyes—yours are not common favours—that he should vouchsafe to call one of your fortune and rank, should admit you into his friendship, which, I am sure, is heaven upon earth. Oh bless him for what he has done, and pray for greater things yet. Holding the truth in love, may you grow up into him in all things. May your sister and brother partake of the same blessings, is the daily request of your friend and servant in the Lord Christ,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XIII.

Dec. 3, 1791.

My very dear Friend.—I have a long letter from H. full of complaints. I know one whose very soul is delighted with hearing such complaints: for they are the breathings of his own Spirit in the heart of his redeemed, and therefore sent, that Christ may be more necessary, and more precious: but indeed, my friend, you legalize them, and make those things distressing which were only intended to be humbling. The cause of every possible complaint is in you, whether you feel it or not. You have an abyss of corruption: so have I, and perhaps felt it deeper than ever you have or will feel it. But I have a teacher who makes this whole body of sin profitable, and to the increase of my faith, and to the magnifying the grace of my almighty Saviour. My daily lesson is to carry my

burden to him, and he carries both me and it: and while we thus go on lovingly together, he often lets me look into the hell within; but he keeps my conscience sprinkled with his atoning blood; and even then I do feel its sovereign virtue to cleanse me from all my sins, if they were ten million times more and greater than they are. Thus believing, yet groaning, under my dreadful load, I hear the Father's testimony, and I honour it: "Thy sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

You met an old saint at Sandwell; and you wished to be in his case. I do not. I suppose you mean F. C. I know him well. I dare not unchristian him. But I thank my God for his leading, I think in a more gospel way, and, I am sure, a safer. Carrying about me a body of sin and death, I groan under it, being burdened; it is my continual plague night and day; it makes me loathe myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Hereby I am kept sensible of my wants, my unworthiness, my helplessness, my vileness: and through grace these things are made useful to bind me closer to my beloved. They render him absolutely necessary to my desperate case, and preach that self-abhorrence which makes Christ very precious. This should be the happy improvement of all the bitter things you write against yourself: in my judgment and experience they make for you. Under the law, they speak guilt and misery. Under the gospel, they magnify the grace and salvation of our God. I observe also that you attend too much, by far, to what others (perhaps professors) say of you: and it brings distress upon you, and hurts your spirits. But they are not your judges; neither are they competent. Thus I read—Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. God can be with you. God can help you to glorify him by your abiding in your calling. He has promised it. In a cottage in Wales you would be out of your place and duty. You would carry yourself there. Retirement in will-worship would make you feel more the plague of your own heart; and your cottage would be a very hell upon earth; because you had left the station wherein God, and his help, and his comforts, were to be found. Indeed, Sir R. you have no justifiable ground of distress, either from God or man. You know the truth of what I say; but still the effect remains. Your heart is not perfectly settled in the gospel rest. He that settled me, he alone can settle you. There comes in another part of Christian friendship, which I do exercise and am diligent in. The prayer of faith availeth much—to keep you, as you are, still full of complaints, but improving them in a free spirit to the glory of the Saviour; a child of Adam, deserving hell; a believer in Jesus; an heir of heaven. May he keep you by his almighty power till he bring you safe to his promised heaven. Thanks for your many favours, and the love that sends them. Our real love to your sister, brother B., and to the household of faith. Mrs. R. joins

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XIV.

TIVERTON, *Sept.* 5, 1794.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—The will of the Lord be done! He does all things for the best; and he is teaching you, not only to say it, but also to feel it. I know it; for his compassions fail not. And he will make you sensible that all his dealings with you are in loving-kindness and great tenderness. Look back; see and admire in what a gracious way he has led hitherto all your steps. Oh what distinguishing favours—to call you by his grace—to make you obedient to his call—to teach you his gospel, in a manner vouchsafed to very few—to keep you by his own power for so many years, that you have not fallen, nor disgraced your profession of our most holy faith, and that to this hour he preserves you, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life! Indeed, my dear sir, these are sovereign blessings; and I verily believe that you are well taught how to apply them on the present occasion: nay, thanks be to him, I have it under your own hand, that he has enabled you to submit to his will. He has taken away a sister; but she is with him. You have lost a friend; but

he has found her. She is dead; but she liveth. Oh most blessed change! She is gone from sin and suffering to live with God for ever. I am ready to say, notwithstanding she will be so much missed in your family, from my very heart I praise and worship him, that he has taken her into his heaven and glory. He did it too in a way which was singularly kind to her surviving relations. I mean those hidings of the Lord's loving countenance, and those desertions and darkness, of which she complained.* You cannot think what a great refreshment this was to my spirits, and what a testimony it was of the soundness of her faith and of her experience. On all these accounts, let your sorrow be turned into joy. Survey your mercies, personal: look at your family: where can you show me so many chosen, and called? Let B. speak. Let Mrs. T. speak. Let all that love H. speak, and say, He is good to them indeed; for his mercy to them endureth for ever. Blessings on him! he is good in what he gives. He is good, yea blest of all, in what he takes away. Strew her hearse with praises; and if a tear be shed, let sorrow be turned into joy; for, what we deposit of her, we commit into his care and keeping, who will make it one day shine like his own most glorious body.

I thank him, therefore, for the good news which you sent me: and with my thanks I join my prayers for your profiting from this providence. It warns you to be ready. You are in the last stage of your journey. He can make it the best. He has promised it; and he cannot break his word. He has a marvellous skill, and an equally marvellous love, in making the infirmities of age so many motives to trust him more. Less of sense, more of faith. Less of self, more of Christ. An infirm body, a sound mind. Nature failing, grace reigning, and that unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. May you find every day, and for every thing, that he is with you, keeping your conscience in his peace, your heart in his love, your life in his hands, and your hope in his glory. Whatever interest I have in him, is yours, and I trust he will make the prayer of faith, which is fervent for you, effectual also. Your letter of August 26th did not come to my hands till September 5th. We are in Devonshire, at my wife's sister's, from whence we remove next week to Mr. Ireland's, Bristol, for the remainder of this month. Mrs. R. is not behind me in best wishes for you and B. and Mr. and Mrs. T., if with you. It is no small part of my happiness, that brotherly love continues. I thank him who gave it, who keeps it, who will keep it unto the end. May he bless you with the choicest of his blessings, and give you to pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER XV.

Clapham, *Sept.* 30.

My good Friend.—I was made to believe that I should have the pleasure of seeing you to-day; but I am sadly disappointed. I wanted to thank you for past favours of this year, as well as many before.

I wanted also to inform you, that no person living ever heard me speak a word against M.'s doctrine. As far as I know, he is sound in the faith; and I esteem him for the truth's sake.

It would have been a real favour done me if I had an opportunity personally of wishing you a good journey. The 121st Psalm be your viaticum, fulfilled in every day's travel, and the last verse made good to you as long as you are upon faith's ground, and then for ever. My love to my dear brother B. I hope he has a Hebrew Bible, and will translate the psalm. I set out after church to Clapham. To-morrow we go to Southampton. God be with you, and guide and keep you. So prays

W. Romaine.

* After this season of darkness she was enabled to rejoice in God our Saviour, and departed in full assurance of faith.

LETTER XVI.

Feb. 7, 1795.

Dear Sir.—In some former wars this treatise met with your approbation; and it pleased God to own it, and to bless it. At the desire of my friends, I have reprinted it, in hopes it may, through the divine favour, bring his people again upon their knees. You know well that prayer has dispersed blacker clouds than the present: and if we are humbled under his mighty hand, God is never at a loss for ways and means to grant us our requests. Please to communicate this to my brother B., and tell him that I believe he will meet some of the best company in the kingdom, at eight o'clock, on Sunday evening. I am, with great respect, your friend and servant in the Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XVII.

*To A. S. Esq.**

March 14, 1774.

Dear Sir.—I want no argument to convince you of the friendship of Mr. S. to W. R. or *vice versâ*. I believe it is of his making who ties eternal bonds. Whenever I think of you, I have only one thing to blame myself for; which I am to try to make amends for, the first opportunity I have, in person.

Your letter has warmed my heart with a fresh proof of your friendship. I do not think it right to take any steps in it myself, but leave it to the great Lord.

Poor R.! It is the worst day that town ever saw. But remember, my good friend, neither you nor I love Christ's flock, nor can love them, as he does. I am afraid, the called are called—and the called shall be well taken care of. They cannot perish. Mrs. T. is amazingly supported. But I am running on I know not whither; and Sunday evening people are coming in: my work begins. Adieu! Yours in our dear, common dear Lord,

W. Romaine.

My blessing on your children.

LETTER XVIII.

Tunbridge Wells, *July* 1, 1774.

My very dear Friend.—I am forced to make my apology for not coming to appointment. I shall not be in town till the 10th instant. God willing, I shall call at K. on the 11th, and shall be happy to meet with you. Do not forget to pray for

W. Romaine

LETTER XIX.

May 5, 1777.

My very dear Friend.—The great breadth of the Atlantic Ocean, nor long distance, nor my not hearing from you, can keep you and me asunder What

* This Correspondent first heard Mr. Romaine on Luke i. 74, 75, in March 1762; but their personal acquaintance did not commence till late in the year 1764. From this period, to the year 1774, both living in or near London, there was no occasion for epistolary communication. Upon the departure of this Correspondent from the metropolis to America, and then on his return to the country, the letters which follow, among others, were written to him by the author.

a wonderful attraction is there in Christian love! I have fellowship with you in spirit, though far absent in body: and in such a bond as no nearness of flesh can tie. Your concerns are mine. I feel them. I rejoice with you. I mourn with you. I pray with you. I meet you at one throne. Our mutual requests are poured into one bosom. His eyes, his heart, are upon us both. He sends my prayers for you back with increasing love to you, and to him for it. Such a friend is our Jesus! Who is like him? By his magnetical virtue, two persons, distant thousands of miles, can have a fellow-feeling. And by means of their common interest in him, they can do one another the very best services: for his Spirit actuates all his members; who, by their oneness with the head, are sensible of their mutual pains and pleasures, as our members in the body are. The nerves all over in contact: and if one member be affected with pain or pleasure, all the members feel with it. I reckoned this my privilege. Among the number (and I trust it is not small) who are wishing you all blessings, I have the honour to be among the foremost, and will yield only to one. My thoughts often turn upon your present situation: distant from your wife and children, far from your friends, separate from your worldly connexions; these do not excite pleasing sensations. But I am chiefly affected for your distance from the ark and ordinances. Does this grieve you? There was one in the wilderness of Judah in your case. Happy should I be, if his sentiments should be yours. Excuse my jealousy over you for indeed it is a godly jealousy. Turn to the 63rd Psalm: and may the breathing of your heart be like his!

I meet with many people who say, they never saw such a need of this petition as at present. Grant us peace in our time, O Lord. I keep on praying; but the cloud does not disperse. It is still thick, black, and lowering. The storm gathers, and threatens a wide-spread ruin. This makes me pray more earnestly I would be found among the holy mourners, deeply concerned, not only for mine own sins, but for theirs also which have brought down the just wrath of heaven. Sin is the cause of our present suffering. Judgment is gone forth; and if there be no turning from sin, judgment will continue: yea, if there be hardness in sin under judgment, it is not only the forerunner of greater misery, but is also a part of the sentence executed. Oh what a prospect does this give me of American misery! What can be worse than they be, left as they are to themselves? God seems to let them alone. He has done with them. Hence they are given up to blindness and hardness. They see not, they fear not, their certain ruin. There is not a word in all the book so fearful in my view as what I see now fulfilling—Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

Thus dark is the prospect, looking at America: but, thank God! we have a brighter scene. The great King over all the earth is manifesting wondrous care for England, in which we rejoice. His church flourishes—many young ministers come out—more coming—a great awakening still, all over our land—some successful attempts towards a general reformation—much prayer and supplication for our turning, as a people, to the Lord—signs of the good-will of God to his church and people, and earnests, I hope, of better things provided for us.

I could not avoid this opportunity of testifying my regard for you; Mrs. S. having promised to enclose this note in her packet. It comes with all prayer for you, and is loaded with a ship-load of good wishes from me and mine. You will give me credit, and believe me to be, in the best bonds, yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XX.

Bradford, Wilts, *Oct.* 20, 1777.

My good Friend.—I do not forget you, nor yours. I have you on my heart in prayer, and have been recommending Mrs. S. in her time of need. Let me hope she is the living mother of a living child, and one of our kingdom, which is the only thing worth being born for. Our excursions are over for this year; and we purpose to dine with Mrs. Talbot next Tuesday The sight of you would

add much to the entertainment, if it could be, and convenient. If we may not expect that favour, I should be glad to hear from you. It is a great prize to meet with a real friend, and a greater still to meet with an approved one. A friend of Christ's making is better still; because he makes everlasting friends.

I am still on my knees before him. He does not cast out my petition: but we are not yet fit for victory and success. His end in chastising is in a great measure answered in his own family. They are humbled. They own the rod is righteous. But he will smite harder, till sinners feel it. The lofty looks of this nature will be humbled. If it be but as Ahab, it will bring Ahab's mercy. However, I pray on, and I do not, I cannot, despair. Common means fail: then is God's time. Till it come, may we wait and trust.

Our love to your dear partner—and my blessing on all your offspring. Do not forget, in your best moments,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXI.

Dec. 22, 1779.

My dear Friend.—I need not tell you that I have you always upon my heart. At this time I am praying for you, that you may be kept very hungry and thirsty after Christ—among them whom he pronounces blessed, and whom he will make blessed. It is a sign of health to have a good appetite. There is no better evidence of our having tasted that the Lord is gracious than still to be waiting on him for the bread of life and for the water of life. And he does truly nourish us when we feel the manna sweet, and the Spirit refreshes our hearts with it. Then that meat is not light bread, but a delightful feast; and the cup of salvation is full, yea runneth over with blessings. May these be the choicest of your Christmas fare! and to make you more willing than ever to sit down with the Lord at his royal table, may the ear of faith hear him speak to you all the twelve days of the feast, yea all the twelve months of the year! Eat, my friend; drink, yea, drink abundantly, my beloved. None more welcome than Mr. and Mrs. S. He would have you to be free, and to take your fill. The meat is from heaven, and feeds the heavenly life. The drink sobers. The more you take of it, the more it will deaden your senses to earthly joys; and it will render spiritual joys more spiritual: for it comes from heaven, and tastes of heaven; and it is indeed a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. In his name I invite you this Christmas; and out of some of his love I wish you to share with us in those blessings. If not present in person, I hope you will be with us in spirit at our banquet: and so to live upon Christ, with his redeemed, as to say with them—He is a feast of fat things—all delights in one. Blessed be our matchless Immanuel, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things: and blessed is his glorious name, not only at Christmas, but for ever: and the whole earth shall be filled with his glory. *Amen* and *Amen*.

I send you some of my remarks on the year 1779, as they occur in my memorandum book. If you can add to them any fresh matter of praise in your observations, it will be a very acceptable present at Blackfriars.

Answers to prayer in the year 1779.
Encouragements to pray on in the year 1780.
Providences appear in favour of England.

I. A very plentiful harvest, and fine weather to get it in, all over the kingdom.
II. Delightful season in Autumn—fruitful in grass, and favourable for the seed-time.
III. The camps remarkably healthy, even to their time of breaking up, although it was late in the year.
IV. Invasions threatened, and attempted, at Guernsey, at Plymouth, but without success.
V. All our fleets brought safe home.
VI. The enemies either taken by us, dispersed and destroyed by storms, or rendered useless by sickness.

VII. The enemies at home as violent as ever, but restrained by him who set bounds to the raging of the sea.

VIII. The blessing of God on our arms in Asia; so great, that not one enemy left in the East Indies.

IX. Providences against France. 1st. They neglected their trade. 2nd. Imprisoned all their sailors on board their ships of war. 3rd. Crowded them also with soldiers. 4th. Hence our great success in privateering. 5th. The hand of God against the French, in visiting their fleets. And 6th. Armies with sickness, by which more have died than many battles could have destroyed. And 7th. Against them in the hurricane at Martinico.

X. Providences against Spain. 1st. Infatuated by French councils to act against their own interest. 2nd. Against every Christian principle in favouring the American rebellion. 3rd. Suffer for it in their miscarrying in their attempt to take our eight Indiamen. 4th. In their siege of Gibraltar. 5th. And in the loss of many rich ships And 6th. In the loss of Omoa, as reported in the Saturday's Gazette.

XI. Providences against America. 1st. In their attempt against Penobscot. 2nd. In their public distresses. 3rd. In their dissensions. 4th. In their paper currency. 5th. In their loss of all vital religion. And 6th. In their present despair on the victory over the French arms and fleet.

N. B. I have a brighter view still to give of God's answer to prayer in spirituals; but my paper fails. Surely God is on our side. He has done great things for us, without our fleets and armies. To him be all the glory. Prayer and praise must go together the next year. Much prayer will afford matter for much praise. Remember in both

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXII.

March 18, 1780.

My very dear Friend.—I do not follow impulses, as you very well know; but I cannot resist the present: night and day, it is upon my mind: my heart runs upon it; and when I would have other thoughts, this will intrude and come uppermost. It will be some relief to me to give it vent, and perhaps answer all my wishes in communicating it to you; for I must inform you that you are the person concerned, and it is in your power to grant me my heart's desire. Ought you not to write up over your door, *Deus nobis hæc otia fecit?* and should it not engage your most serious attention? How shall I employ these *horæ solitariæ* most and best to the glory of my God, and, as far as he pleases, to enable me to promote the interest of his dear people? I think you was not sent to M— for nothing. Outward causes we look beyond. His hand hath certainly done it. Well, then, come forward. When you know your call, be ready. Here I am: send me: what is the will of my Lord? He has given me leisure: my capacity, be it what it may, is his sovereign gift. "And the right use of it is also of his sovereign grace. What would my Lord have me to do, in order to show forth his praise?"

I can answer for you, that these are your sentiments—I am certain they are. And will you give me leave to point out what appears to me a most profitable and a most seasonable improvement of this gracious opportunity? I suppose you are now and then thanking that great and good Saviour, who had led you to glorify his name and his offices, and had enabled you to bear a noble testimony for his Godhead in this day of blasphemy. In such seasons of gratitude, does it not sometimes occur to you, that you were assisted in this work by him who leadeth into all truth? Indeed, Sir, you are under marvellous obligations—the greatest which can possibly be—to the Lord God, the Holy Ghost. You owe him more than you can ever repay—more than you can ever count up. Your returns, the most grateful, are but acknowledgments; and these are also his gifts. What, if you was to sit down and try to estimate your debt—consider who he is—what he does in the spiritual world—what he has done for you and

in you—will do as long as you have your being—resolve all this in your mind—pray him to impress it deep upon your heart: the consequence, I verily believe, will be, that the blessings derived from him are infinite, and your obligations such as demand everlasting praise. With a heart warmed with these views, you could not be able to resist the dictates of gratitude. You would look up and say, May the Spirit of wisdom and revelation assist me to treat of his true and essential divinity—His scripture names, Holy Spirit—Jehovah, Lord, God, Almighty—Attributes—Works—Offices—Spirit of Life—Lord and Giver of life—Continuer of it—Giver of all grace, faith, hope, love, loving obedience, patient suffering—Leader into all truth—A Witness for Jesus—Glorifier of Jesus—Sanctifier of all the elect people of God, who abideth with them for ever—The Comforter—The Advocate—The Strengthener—The taker of the things of Jesus, who ἀνάγγελει, makes them clear and plain.

Here is work for you! May he fit you for it with good will and power! My prayers shall follow my advice. And may he put it into your heart, as I trust he has into mine. The blessing of the Blesser of all nations be with you and with Mrs. S. and all your children. I entreat you never to forget

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XXIII.

June 13, 1780

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.—The only design of my writing to you is, to fulfil my promise. The first visit we paid this summer was to be in ——. The time is come, if agreeable to you, next week, on Monday or Tuesday: your answer, early, will be a great favour. Having many, many things to say afresh on the old subject—the evil of sin, and the blessedness of grace, they must be reserved to our walks in your retirement. Pray for us. We want your prayers more than ever. I do not forget Mrs. S. and all yours. Remember me and mine, who are in bonds of real love, your true servants,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XXIV.

June 19, 1780

DEAR SIR.—O how uncertain are human hopes! I was to have been in —— at the time I am writing this; but I could not attain my wish. The effects of the late troubles begin to be felt; Mrs. P. died of the mob last Saturday. I am obliged, at her request, to stay to preach her funeral sermon. Perhaps somebody may soon preach mine; my house and life are both threatened; but my Lord ruleth over all. I desire to live and die by the faith of the Son of God. How he pleases to dismiss me, when, and where; not my will, Lord, but thine be done! If I am permitted to see you in the flesh, I can tell you of persons and things, at which both your ears will tingle. If I cannot get to you soon, I would gladly convey your manuscript, with my *imprimatur*, if I knew of any conveyance. I am really with you in the Spirit. Every blessing of the covenant be with Mrs. S. Remember me, called at last, to the hardest service. Pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XXV.

BLACKFRIARS, *Aug.* 30, 1780.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I hope this will reach you to-morrow morning, Aug. 31, to be my harbinger. God willing, I shall follow it to your house on Wednesday, and, if all things favour, be with you before two o'clock. I am still at prayers,

waiting for a favourable answer, which I expect soon. My comfort is, amidst all confusions—The Lord reigneth: the government is on his shoulders, and well managed. He has but one simple plan: he intends his own glory, and makes all things work together under him to promote it; with which his people's good is inseparably connected. I have many things to say, but trust to get time to tell you how much I am in the best bonds, yours for Jesus' sake,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXVI.

Sept. 18, 1780

My dear Friend.—I long to see you face to face, and, if you have no other engagements, the time is near: we hope to dine with you at two o'clock this day se'nnight, 25th instant. If all be agreeable, give us a line to put us in spirits: not that I want them about any thing, except our ride. In such storms, we must repose ourselves in our pilot's skill and power: his ark is safe, and all embarked in it will get to their desired port. But I feel for them who are at present tossed with us in the storm, but not in the same keeping of his almighty love. To them I preach. For them I pray. Oh that they may see their danger, and get into the ark, before they perish: but I reserve these things for conversation. Mrs. R. joins in every good prayer to Mrs. S. and yourself, with your very much obliged, and faithful friend,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXVII.

Nov. 3, 1780.

My good Friend.—We have a sort of correspondence; but it is through others, and a good deal in signs and dumb show: and yet we discover one another's mind, but not clearly and distinctly. When we are at Mr. S.'s, he has a daughter who was once dumb, and is still deaf; but she has learned to speak, and converses with us: sometimes she cannot understand us, and then we are forced to write our mind to her. I am in the same situation at present.

Your present studies are much upon my heart. May that ever blessed person to whom they relate deign to favour and smile upon them. Among his other high styles and titles, there is one divinely glorious, which has greatly employed my thoughts, and affected my heart of late; *viz.* "the Spirit of adoption:" the received meaning of which is, taking a stranger into the family, and giving him the privilege of a son. This is, among men, a matter of pure favour: and it increases in value according to the greatness of the estate hereby conveyed. When the Adopter has thus raised a poor beggar, he may enrich him with a princely fortune; but he cannot give him the temper and affection of a dutiful child. The adopted may prove ungrateful; he may abuse the favour, mis-spend the fortune, and be worse for the adoption. But it is quite otherwise when God gives his Spirit: he, at the same time, creâtes spiritual life in the adopted son, unites him by his almighty power to Jesus, and thereby enables him to live by faith, in and on Jesus; through whom he knows and finds the Father's love: thus he forms the son for the family. He lives as Christ does—has the mind of Christ—judges of things as Christ does, Eph. i.—has the same affections, as 1 John v. 1, 2, 3.—has the same relations with Christ, as John xvii.—has the same inheritance, Rom. viii.—and for the same duration, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Eph. i. 14. In this view, the Spirit of adoption bestows the highest dignity a creature can possibly receive—united by one Spirit to Immanuel, and in him united to the Father, and thereby capable of enjoying the greatest happiness of which any creature can possibly partake, even to be a partaker of the divine nature.

In meditating upon this subject, may our sentiments be the same with the apostle, 1 John iii. 1, 2, 3, and our experience like his.

I desire to be remembered by you on all propitious occasions. When prayer is fervent, and brotherly love active, recommend to the King's especial favour and grace

W. ROMAINE,
And all his.

LETTER XXVIII.

BLACKFRIARS, *Jan.* 31, 1781.

DEAR SIR.—My silence has been owing to a sore finger, which has for some months hindered me from writing at all; at present it is with pain. I have seen the outside of Mr. H.'s publication; but have no desire to take one view within. I wish to keep to my motto—*Homo sum unius libri;* of which, the more I read, the more I long to read: it is always new, always instructing, always delightful. In books I converse with men; in the Bible I converse with God. That most blessed Spirit, of whom you are writing, speaks with the word to my heart; and then I look up, and entreat him to get himself glory from you and your labours. In this sweet intercourse I am often present at ——. I pay you frequent visits in your study, and rejoice in beholding the advancement of the work. When I see you hard and industrious in your writing, I cannot help praying the Holy Ghost to inspire your thoughts, and to give you the pen of a ready writer. What, if you are laid aside for a little while, and kept out of your line of life; may it not be of mercy, that you may have leisure to improve in self-knowledge? O blessed retirement, if it prove the means of leading you to devote your time and talents to the service of that God, who has conferred such favours upon you! He has given you life—life from the dead. What is that mercy? Who can tell? It passeth knowledge. He has given you the Spirit of life, who has been teaching you to live upon the fulness of Immanuel. He has been testifying of that fulness to you, and, I hope, enabling you to glorify it in word and in deed. His gracious office herein is one of the most interesting views which we can take of his and of the Saviour's love as represented, John xvi. 14, 15—a favourite text of mine, on which I have preached many times. If you look to the Greek, you will consider the word ἀνάγγελει, translated to show a very gross mistake: it belongs to the ear, and not to the eye—not to seeing, but to speaking—to the word which, preached clearly, begets faith, and which, believed, nourishes faith, and, as faith increases, glorifies still more that fulness of Jesus, out of which comes every grace and blessing. Hence the word is often used in the New Testament for preaching the gospel, by which the testimony of the Spirit is received, and the fulness of Jesus glorified and made use of. I would render the word—He shall clearly declare or preach, and so manifest the things of Christ, that they shall become the object of faith, and hope, and love. I could write a volume on this most gracious office of the Spirit. May you see it in my light, or rather in his own light; and let it shine before men. The winter is retiring. Already the aconite proclaims the genial influence of the returning light. And yet I have not visited, as it was intended, Reading friends, and St. Giles's pulpit: but it has not been in my power, as you shall hear by and by. A new member, I trust, born of your family into ours. God bless him! My love and Mrs. R.'s to the mother. My finger aches; and when you see where the sore has been, and is still, you will wonder how I can write at all. Farewell, and pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XXIX.

June 2, 1781.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I am not master of my time, nor of myself: London is my prison; for I cannot do what I would. When I have set me down to read your papers, presently a knock: "Sir, you are wanted:" and this, again and again. At last, I resolved to get a little way out of town; which I did this week, and,

being quite alone, I have had leisure to go through them My remarks upon them are so many, and so material, that what I have put down can be of little use unless I can be with you two or three days. My lectures finish July 1:—my life may before. God sparing it, I would make my first excursion to ——. I send you so long notice, that, when it is fixed, nothing may hinder our meeting. Let us know as soon as you conveniently can, that we may order our matters accordingly. Time is short: working time for God shorter still. May we do his will in our places, glorify him in word and deed; and, when activity ceases, glorify him in simple dependence. It is but right you should leave a testimony under your own hand of his unspeakable love to you, and more so in this blasphemous generation. After I have communicated my thoughts to you, I shall gladly give my *imprimatur* to the blessed truths which you have written. Mrs. R.'s love to our old friend Mrs. S. My blessing on your children. I am just got home; and have much to do for to-morrow's message. Pray for

W. Romaine.

This day, last year, the riots began. The thermometer is again at riot-heat. Grant us peace in our time, O Lord! He has stopped—He does stop—He will stop the madness of the people.

LETTER XXX.

Reading, *March* 5, 1782.

Here I am, in my way Sion-ward—Salutes to fellow-travellers at Heckfield—Go forward—Your time shortens fast—The journey will soon be over—Let nothing stop you—He who set you in the way has provided every thing needful to keep you in it safe from the malice and power of all your enemies. Look to Jesus. May you never lose sight of him by faith till you be admitted to the open vision of our God. I have many things to tell you of him—all good—and scarce any thing good of any one else. You will favour me with a visit when convenient, and continue to pray for

W. Romaine,

Who never forgets you, or yours.

LETTER XXXI.

Southampton, *Sept.* 29, 1782.

My dear Friend —My heart leaped for joy at the reading of your letter: I have much and long wished to visit you at Heckfield, and this would have been the opportunity; but I am here for health, and have only bathed twice: after about five or six times more, I must hurry to London, to a wedding—the parties being waiting impatiently for my arrival; none else must do it; both being my children, whom I cannot refuse. Now I know I may come, it will be no difficulty to find my way another time. Indeed, I should have been glad to have assisted at the dedication of your new house; but you begin, and we finish; so it will be well consecrated in time. Let me entreat you not to lay aside the revisal of your papers: my heart is much set upon their publication. I flatter myself that I shall find your last hand put to them; and my prayers for a blessing on writing will be turned into prayers for a blessing on printing. May the Holy Ghost be sent down from heaven upon it, and may he accompany it with his effectual grace. Mrs. R. joins in every good wish to you and to Mrs. S. My blessing on your children. As I have you by name in my Love's Litany, which I use to-night, do not, I entreat you, forget to pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXXII.

Tuesday, July 1, 1783.

My very dear Friend.—I am looking forward with pleasure to the day, when I shall see Heckfield friends; my preaching at Reading is fixed for the 20th instant. If it be quite agreeable to you, we will make our journey that way, and be with you the 16th. I understand that you have a revise now with you. If this comes time enough, you will favour me with a line, that we may be certain about our route. You can receive no visiters more truly attached to your best interests. I have you much on my heart, and in my prayers. It is my privilege, and I feel it my happiness, to be in the best bonds, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

Mrs. R. joins in every good wish, as does my son, who is with us, to you and yours.

LETTER XXXIII.

My very dear Friend.—A sure foundation is a great mercy: so I learn daily: my Lord, and He only, is that foundation.—What more fixed than given under my hand?—"On the 16th, I shall be at Heckfield." But Mr. C—— has overturned my plan. He thought it not right to have the society sermon on the day of the confirmation: he wrote to me about it: I acquiesced. It is to be Sunday the 27th; but, intending to finish my summer campaign to-morrow, it seemed a favourable opportunity to go to see my son for some days. We purpose to stay with him till Friday next, and hope to be at Reading, at the Crown, early in the afternoon, so as to eat our bread and cheese at Heckfield. We very thankfully accept the offer of your chaise on Friday next, and shall be glad to see it at the said Crown; excuse this yea and nay work, in which I am quite patient; and believe me to be, on other grounds, yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXXIV.

Reading, *Aug.* 2, 1783.

My very dear in the Lord.—We are in continual danger; our friends, our enemies lay snares for us—smiles may hurt, as well as frowns. But where we love God in our friends, he gives us a spiritual use of their love. Our conversation, and every mutual intercourse of kindness, is sanctified. He makes us a blessing to one another, and thereby gets glory to his grace. I am sure he did from me at Heckfield; and I never felt his goodness more in all my life, than in worshipping him at my Oratory: there I set up my Ebenezer afresh. The bench, and the oak, and the heath, and the spring, can all witness for God, that he is good, and that his mercy endureth for ever. Through his kind hand over us, we purpose to be ready Monday morning to make use of your offered favour; Mrs. R. will be prepared about eleven: God give us a profitable meeting! I am adoring his bounty for such a harvest—such weather—and with my praises, joining prayers for a spiritual harvest, that his labourers may get it in fast, and the Lord's garner be soon full. Lord hasten that most glorious day, and keep you and me hastening to it! Our love to Mrs. S.: my blessing on all your children. Do not forget, I beseech you,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXXV.

Southampton, *Oct.* 14, 1783.

My dear Friend.—Having an opportunity of conveying a line to you, by means of Mrs. C———, I gladly embrace it. I write from Southampton, where

we are to stay till the 21st or 22nd instant; it is not determined yet what road we take—but it is absolutely fixed that we shall be at home by the 26th. Mr. and Mrs. C——— press hard to make Reading in the way: if they prevail, it will only be for the Thursday evening's lecture: and perhaps our seeing you face to face may incline us to prefer the Basingstoke road.

I have good news to tell you from a far country, as refreshing as cold water to a thirsty soul. God has spared me to read over my Bible once more: O what a treasure—what unsearchable riches are there in this golden mine! I never dug deeper, nor found more precious jewels, than upon this last perusal. You know it is my constant custom, as soon as St. Dunstan's lectures are over, to begin the Bible, and without stopping or interruption, to go on from Genesis to the end of the Revelation; this exercise is always begun with prayer, and carried on with a settled dependence on the Spirit of prayer; and I am always wishing to ascribe all the profit (and it has been very, very great) to the praise of the glory of his grace. At present, I am not reading my Bible in order to find out some new truth, but to be established in what I do know, and to attain more confirmation of it. This I would chiefly seek for, that I may get growing experience of the wisdom of God, and of the power of God in his word, and may thereby enjoy the blessings of his love promised in it. With this view, I send you some of my observations on the reading of the Bible in the year 83. I am happy in believing that your heart harmonizes with me in them. One of the first things to be noticed and expected is, the actual fulfilling of the promises to this day, namely, that the Holy Spirit is still in the word: he works in it, and by it. He makes it at present, as much as he ever did, the great ordinance of God unto salvation, as you may observe in Isaiah lix. 20, 21. Hence it is called the ministration of the Spirit; because in it he holds forth Jesus Christ to be the Almighty Saviour: and whomsoever he calls by it to come to the Saviour, he makes his call to them effectual. They receive the Spirit, by the hearing of the word, as Gal. iii. 2.

This, my good friend, is what you and I should above all things seek. We should be always praying for the Spirit to accompany his own word. It is our duty to hear and read—but we should always do it with the fixed dependence of our hearts upon his divine teaching; without which, the word itself will profit us nothing, as we read Heb. iv. 2: "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it." May the good Spirit keep us in the use of means, but entirely dependent upon him in the use of them. Thanks be to him, that in this frame of mind I have once more gone through his word—settled and grounded more steadfastly than ever before, that the word of God can be made useful to me, only by the Spirit of God. The next thing that engaged my attention was the divine and infallible truth of the holy Scriptures, of which I have been convinced with all the riches of the full assurance of understanding. Our Lord said in his last prayer—"Father, thy word is truth." And I say the same. I have set my seal to it on this last reading: every line, every word, is according to the mind of the infinitely wise God. It is his revealed will; and it discovers to us objects in God's light, as he sees them—Whereby the Holy Spirit renews us in true knowledge, after the image of him that created us: he brings our understanding to submit to be informed by his unerring word. Whatever it reveals of Jehovah, of the three persons in Jehovah, of the God-man, of his salvation, of the way of receiving the benefit of it in time and in eternity; he has made me willing to live in entire subjection to its teaching. My constant inquiry is—What it reveals; not, Why? I study to know it, not as a metaphysician, but as a Christian. I seek, not so much to comprehend it, as to believe it. Nothing appears to me more reasonable, than that my reason should submit to God's reason: and therefore I am kept praying for divine grace, to make his word, like the light of the sun, clear in my head, and fruitful in my heart.

My dear friend, let me recommend to you this method of reading your Bible. Ever take it up as the oracles of God—the infallible standard of truth. The abiding persuasion of this will save you a great deal of trouble, and will bring you in vast profit. You will not have much occasion to consult authors, or to spend your time in perusing many books. If you take up your Bible with a settled

conviction that it is the truth of God, and that it has the stamp of divine authority, this will be the means of your understanding more of the Scriptures, than all the comments in the world could give you: because your mind, having received the impression of divine truth, is now disposed to receive the impression of divine power; which is another matchless excellency of the word of God.

The Spirit of God still works in it, and by it; as in the first creation, so in the new creation—He does all by his Almighty *fiat*. He speaks, and it is done: he commands, and is obeyed. His is a creating word: he calls, and the dead hear. It is a life-giving word: he follows the call, and the quickened sinner believes—faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and this faith is as great a demonstration of divine power, as raising Christ from the dead was; as you may see, Eph. i. 19, 20, &c. Then he puts his word into the inward parts, and the believer is enabled to feed upon it, and to be nourished thereby, even up unto life everlasting: so that he often says to his Lord—"Jesus, to whom should I go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life." This divine efficacy of the Scriptures is the principal thing by which God magnifies his word above all his name. He has made it his ordinance, like the fixed laws of nature—by which he still keeps up intercourse and communion between himself and his people, and gives them to see and to enjoy his perfections. His Spirit makes it effectual to begin and to carry on fellowship with the Father and the Son. And thus he is daily magnifying it, by realizing the promises, and putting believers into possession of the graces and blessings promised in it. So that it is to this hour the mighty power of God, as truly as when he spake the world into being; as effectual as when he said, "Lazarus, come forth." My dear friend, may you and I feel it more, still more: may we live happy partakers of its influence—and whenever we hear it, read it, or meditate upon it, may we get fresh experience of the power of God in his word; which will bring us another blessing peculiar to the Scriptures: by acknowledging them to be the truth of God, and finding them to be the power of God, we shall come to experience their divine sweetness.

It is by continual dependence on the teaching of the Spirit, in and by the word, and by mixing faith with it, that we come to find its value and to taste its pleasures: for it then opens a new world to us, a spiritual and eternal world—it reveals to us the God of that world—our Father, loving us in his Son—it makes known the Son's wonderful person, and his heavenly work in salvation, with all the blessings of it, which faith brings into present enjoyment. The believer is made alive to him, and then has his spiritual senses exercised upon them—and each sense has its proper object and its peculiar delight, as we read—O come *taste*, and *see*, how gracious the Lord is—*hear* his voice for it is sweet—*smell* the good odour of his perfume, for his name is an ointment poured forth—come and *handle* the word of God. What a paradise is here! as real, but more blessed, than Adam's. Believe me, sir; I know you do. In my last reading God has thus blessed me; what the word reports, the Spirit has realized. In the way of believing the promises, I have found the fulfilling of them. I speak for God, and his glorious word. Away, self! The Holy Ghost the comforter, does by it at this day make good his name and his office; he shall take of mine, says Jesus, and shall show it, manifest it, unto you, the spiritual world, all the graces, all the glories of it—he will not only manifest them to you clearly; but he will also enable you to believe them with a pleasing earnest, and to enjoy them with many a sweet foretaste of the glory that is to be revealed.

There is a very delightful account of this in the 19th Psalm. What if I should set my seal to it, and say, that I know what is spoken in the first part concerning the light of this world to be matter of fact, as well as what is spoken in the second part concerning the light of the spiritual world? Would not you allow me, sir, to be a competent judge of both? And when the same prophet adds—"O, what love have I unto thy law! I rejoice in it, as one that findeth great spoils! Yea, it is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver;"—blessed be God, I find it so. Indeed, upon every reading of the Bible, it grows more precious to me, as it did to David; because it is not only the discovery, but it is become also the conveyance of the unsearchable riches of Christ—these

are revealed in the word, and applied by the word. Faith is the lawful key, which opens the infinite treasury, and hears the proclamation of grace—" O ye that are seeking durable riches—these, all these are yours—come, take all you want—use all you wish—you cannot do the free giver a greater favour, than to enrich yourselves daily out of his boundless store—Read his promises, how exceeding great, how exceeding precious they are—read his faithfulness to them—Only trust—take—use—all that is in the promises shall be yours in time—yea, yours in eternity." This proclamation of grace I have heard. I believe it. Blessed be a promise-keeping God, I enjoy it. And I can assure you, sir, there is more to be had out of Christ's fulness, than any one upon earth has yet enjoyed. For he not only giveth fresh grace, but also more grace. I have never been more thoroughly convinced of this, than upon my last reading. God has humbled me, and has made me feel more of mine own poverty, and has thereby led me to live more upon Christ's everlasting treasury. You do not suspect me of boasting; O no. I would glorify the word and work of the Almighty. A beggar would not be reckoned proud for saying—" When I was just starving, I met with a charitable person, who not only fed me, but also feasted me; and then most generously provided for me all the rest of my days." Should not such an one acknowledge his benefactor, and bless him? So do I. Thanks be to him, who realized to me his word—who opened mine eyes to see wondrous things out of his law—who often made me to look up and say—" O how sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth."—Blessed be God for his good word—it is really manna—it is angels' food—it comes from heaven—it tastes of heaven.

When I sat down to write, I little thought my pen would run so fast, or that it would hold out so long. Will you excuse this long scribble? You will. I am writing to a friend, who knows that I have still much more to say of my last reading. I bespeak your candour, while I am mentioning one thing more—and that is, the great end and design of the Scripture, which is, to conform us to it. This is the completing work of God the Spirit by his word; all the rest were led to this. When the word is understood, and believed, and lived upon, then he makes it the means of conforming the whole man to it. The believer is cast into the mould of it, he takes the impression—every feature. It is so assimilating, every tint is to be seen upon him. He lives the word—it is to be read in his looks—visible in his walk—manifest in his tempers. See him—study him—he is the lively picture of a Bible-Christian: let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ. By this rule he orders it; he seeks to be a pattern of the truth as it is in Jesus, and does not seek in vain. The Spirit by faith makes Jesus very precious. The heart loves him, loves to be like him; much fellowship with him endears him more to the heart; and it becomes true liberty—it is real happiness to have constant communion with him, especially to feel the influence of his cross and the power of his resurrection.

My much beloved, may this be your experience. Outstrip me as far as you can: may your sentiments, your affections, your life and conduct, all of them be conformed to the rule of God's word. I shall pray for it, for you and for yours, that you may live by gospel motives, and do all to gospel ends. And may the Bible be made good and fulfilled to you in earth and in heaven.

I stop; but not because my subject is exhausted: I have daily fresh matter of praise. Still I am reading and admiring. New beauties spring up. Yearly, daily, I shall have praises to give for this most blessed book: and if I live to walk with you on Heckfield Heath, I may continue the subject. May your Lord and mine open our understandings, that we may understand the scriptures.

Mrs. R.'s with my real love to Mrs. S. My blessing on all your children. Do not cease to pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXXVI.

Dec. 7, 1783.

My very dear Sir.—Having an opportunity of sending you a line by a friend coming to Reading, although I am very busy, yet I could not help telling you that I rejoice with them that do rejoice. I congratulate you on the birth of your son; and I thank him who has been so kind as to spare mother and child, both, I hope, for his own kingdom and glory. I have a heart-felt pleasure, which I never heard any body mention of themselves; namely, when I hear of the birth of any person: it rejoices me to think that there is one more born into our family, and one more voice added to the grand concert. Among them let us number our little John—I don't mean that his name should be called John, but that he may be a gracious child, as that word signifies; and a significant name, and a scripture name too, I think is best. I have a custom in Lent to catechise the children; and at every fresh time of standing up, I ask a new person, What is your name? And I tell them what it means, and beg of them to remember it. If they do not live up to it, not only I will witness, but also their very name will rise up against them. John, for instance; your name says that you have grace. Now if you tell lies, and are angry, and fight your brothers and sisters, or disobey your parents, then you are graceless John. This often strikes children, and others also; for I knew a woman who came in on a Friday into our church, and God made this simple way (the speaking to the children) the means of her conversion. On the birth of the infant, be his name what it may, only let it be a scripture name, I will send you a birth-day ode, of a very ancient date, but on the greatest occasion that ever was or will be recorded; on which you and I must place all our hopes. It is called, "A Psalm to be sung by the Sons of fallen Man;" and among them my soul is now singing it, and I am making melody in my heart unto the Lord. They first took it up and sung it:

1. When they laid the foundation (of the temple) on the mountains of the Holy One. 2. (Then it appeared that) Jehovah loved the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. 3. For the most glorious things had been foretold of thee, thou city of the Alehim: Selah (weigh this well). 4. I will cause it to be mentioned to them who shall know me, at Rahab and Babylon; yea, behold to them also of Philistia and of Tyre, This name shall be born (God incarnate). 5. And to Sion it shall be said, A person and a person (God and man) shall be born in her; and he himself (the God-man) shall establish her (the church Sion). 6. Jehovah has recorded it, when he was registering the people (of his church), that this name shall be born. 7. (And then all his people,) the singers, as well as the performers on instruments, shall say, "All my fresh springs are in thee." All, all the springs of grace, all the springs of glory, arise from the incarnate God. I feel, eternal blessings on him, a little stream of this grace; and I do most heartily join the whole choir, who are now giving glory to God and the Lamb. I know you will say, *Amen.*

Here is an ode for you. Sing it on your son's birth. In the light I view it, it is one of the greatest compositions in the word. Indeed, it is the sum of all. Jehovah incarnate includes the whole of our faith and practice, and the experience of it is our blessedness in earth and in heaven. May it be our crown of rejoicing. How I write on! it was to be a note—and see, how it grows into a long letter! But I must stop—the bearer is come. Adieu. God be with you and yours. Pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXXVII.

Dec. 23, 1783.

Dear Sir.—Mr. N. just now tells me he is coming to Reading to-morrow to assist Mr. Cadogan, and will wait while I write my thanks for your last by Mr. M. We can get out of debt with one another by our acknowledgments; but we grow

more in debt, the better we acknowledge our great debt. In my present view of things, I would not be an Arminian for the world; because I am not only willing, but happy, in getting more and more into Christ's debt. They are only pensioners in heaven; they take all from him in use, and carry all back to him in praise. God teach us this heavenly lesson. Although I have learned but little, yet I would not be saved in any other way than by sovereign grace; for only by this can I find employment in oneness with God, or happiness in God—All is grace, all is debt. The sense of this keeps one humble, and thereby willing to acknowledge favours received from one another. I feel it towards you. May the same be yours this Christmas—thankfulness on your heart—blessing God, that he would dwell in man, that man might dwell in God. Glory be to him εν ὑψιστοις for this infinite mercy. You say, and I say, *Amen*

But N. waits, and must go. I stop my pen—My heart is the same. May you never forget, in your best moments,

W. Romaine.

And when you have the King's ear, ask a favour for me. God be with all yours.

LETTER XXXVIII.

March 5, 1784.

My very dear Friend.—Mr. N. just now informed me that he was coming down to Reading, and would wait while I wrote two or three lines. I am first to acknowledge your obliging letter of Feb. 23, and am thankful for that gracious assistance which has been vouchsafed unto you, to begin, to carry on, and now to complete your testimony for the honour of the eternal Spirit. He will make what use of it he pleases: success is his; we cannot command it; but we have been seeking to him for it; my prayers have been as constant as yours. Besides the truth, we want the power; this I have been asking, entreating him to set his seal to the work, and then it will answer your purpose and mine. And for this also I shall continue to make request.

I have much to say, but want time. Our hearty love to your dear partner. My blessing on the children. Remember

W. Romaine.

LETTER XXXIX.

June 14, 1784.

My dear Friend.—I have this moment received your letter. I say nothing of the contents, for He does all things well: so you will find it, the longer you know him and the more you trust him. I am at present his prisoner, as well as you. But sickness with Jesus is paradise; and he will give you at Bath the water of life which proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb—an antidote against the fear as well as the sting of death. You propose too short a time to give the waters a fair trial; six weeks is the general allowance: but you will judge as you find them agree. You are to lodge and board at Mrs. S.'s, on the Parade. Every body knows her. She will make your stay as agreeable as she can. Make use of my name. You will soon find she is a bigot to ——; but, I trust, a real Christian notwithstanding. I am not afraid of her making you a bigot that way.

As to my visit at Heckfield, it is so far off that I cannot even guess at the time: it cannot be till September, if then; my course lies quite another way.

May God be with you; your guide on the way, give virtue to the waters, and bring you home in health, prospering in body and mind. I can only add our real love to your dear partner. My blessing on all the children. May you never forget, in your best moments, your friend in our common Lord,

W. Romaine.

Oh, that 85th Psalm has made me much sweet melody in the house of my pilgrimage; for I know a little of that holy longing which the blessed man felt in his heart, and which made the presence of God in his house and ordinances so delightful to him.

Mrs. R. joins me in all my good wishes to you and to yours, Mrs. S. and family.

LETTER XL.

January 7, 1785.

My very dear Friend.—I have been living upon promises, but sadly disappointed—promises of men. Mr. M. said you were to be in town in November. Then I heard you were to bring your son to Mr. Clarke's. After, you were to come early in the year. I have waited, and lo! dumb —— came. Nothing to be depended on still. Well, although I have nothing new to send, yet the old repeated wishes of a happy new year. And I will speak of the ——, if nobody else will, and declare it is very good: indeed, according to Mr. Locke, it was eloquent, for it spake in actions from whence it came: it tastes of Heckfield. Our motto this year was, "Go forward." All in a wrong way till set right. He who sets us in the right way has provided every thing needful to keep us going, pressing on, till he bring us to the end of our journey; to which he encourages us by promises, by examples, by setting before us the shortness of the journey, and what awaits us at the end of it. I wish you had been with us in person; as that could not be, I rejoice in your company as a fellow-traveller; and I am happy in believing that I have your prayers, as you have mine, for our persevering—going forward, till we finish our course with joy. I am in the last stage; and for the prospect of safety and happiness through life and death, blessed, most blessed, be the name of my Jesus!

I have many things to say, which I cannot enlarge upon in this note. As, first, you should consider of a new edition of the first volume; there is a great demand for it: while the second is on sale, the first will be always asked for; and as it is not to be had, it stops the sale of the second. The method of publication should be considered. I do not propose any thing, but could wish you to add what would make it about the size of the second; and to be at no expense. I am sure booksellers could be found who would print it. Pray, sir, weigh this matter—ask our Great Counsellor his advice, and favour me with a visit soon. I would come to you, but my Lord's work will not suffer; and I assure you, under my hand, although it has been this Christmas almost too much for me, yet he made it the best Christmas in my life. Oh, he is indeed a very bountiful Master! His work is wages. To be weary in his service is a cordial. Eternal thanks be to him for his most undeserved favours to such a poor creature. I adore him for you—your testimony—*Horæ Solitariæ*. Tell Mrs. S. I love her, and make interest often for her to my good Lord. May he take care of all the family at home and abroad, and, as they grow up, make them his.

W. Romaine.

LETTER XLI.

April 16, 1785.

Dear S.—I have not many things to wish to live for; but this is one. It is on my heart to see the new edition, with additions, of the first volume of *Horæ Solitariæ*. I have been much mortified in my application to the booksellers. We must use the world and the people of it for our Lord's honour. If you see nothing foreign to that in the present proposal, you will please to let me know. Rather than it should not be published, I will stand between you and him, and save you some uneasy feelings I was in such a hurry to communicate this intel-

ligence, that I do not delay a moment. I am often at Heckfield, and visit my bench. Come as often to Blackfriars, and pray without ceasing for

W. Romaine,

And all his, as he does for you and yours.

LETTER XLII.

Saturday, Two o'Clock.

My dear Friend.—We could not call on you yesterday: we met with many disappointments, and got to Reading late. But our great journey is prosperous—mine is nearly at an end. Backward, forward, looking to the present—all is well—the greatest miracle of grace that ever was or will be. To-morrow I hope to see you, and to tell you something of his love and of my love. The little flame of mine kindled by his, and kept alive by it—His kindled ours also. May it evince itself day by day, till it be swallowed up in his love for ever and ever. Our kindest wishes to Mrs. S., and my blessing on all your children. Remember, I believe you do, but continue to remember,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XLIII.

July 22, 1785.

My very dear Friend.—We must thank you very much for the offer of your chaise; but although I purpose to be with you the 16th, yet I cannot fix any hour or place. God will direct our way to you. I believe our meeting is as much under his eye, and will be as truly with his blessing, as the good old father met his son in Egypt. May he fit us for his favours as well as his trials, and make both work together for good. If, through his providence, I could be certain of time and place, I will let you know; if I cannot, expect us not till you see us. Our love to Mrs. S., and my blessing on all your children. I am, very sincerely, yours in our good Lord, who is the bond of all holy union,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XLIV.

October, 1785.

Dear Sir.—We are all disappointed at not seeing you, and acquiesce only in His will, who knows how to turn all our disappointments into good. All His will requires faith in exercise—may your trials improve it. You are on my heart always, you and yours. Mrs. Talbot continues in a weak, and, as I think, a dying state; but is safe, and in good hands. I do not forget Mrs. S. Pray still for

W. Romaine.

We return home on Friday for our winter campaign.

LETTER XLV.

Nov. 21, 1785.

My dear Friend.—I have taken great pains to get some of your sort of potatoes. Last year I employed Mr. Thatcher, seedsman, in Fleet Street, and this year Mr. Robson, in Holborn, who spoke to Mr. Howard, the person who first brought them into England He is the writer of the history of all the gaols

in Europe, which he has visited. He is now gone to see the state of the Calabrias since the earthquakes; from thence to the Barbary coast, to inquire into the present method of treating the plague, and what can be done to stop or to cure the infection. He is a man of great fortune and of great charity; and says that he grows none at present but what he gives away to the poor; therefore I must come at last to you, through necessity. My real friend, Mr. Walter Taylor, of Southampton, is very pressing with me to get him some against the next season. If you would let me have them in my own way, it would be a great favour. I want enow to plant two acres; but if you will not let me pay for them, I would be beholden to you for a small quantity for him to begin with. Mr. Howard says he plants twenty bushels to an acre, which, on his light land, (near Bedford,) in a wet season, produce an amazing increase. Enclosed you will receive a present of my own Hebrew Bible, (not a bribe, but a token of Christian love,) that, remembering me as often as you see it, you may pray for me while I live, and bless God for me when I die. It is truly a precious book. Every day it grows more precious; not only from it fresh light, and life, and comfort, but also more. Many years' studies, with God's blessing upon them, have favoured me with an insight into the meaning of Col. ii. 2. Eternal thanks be to a divine teacher for opening all the riches of the full assurance of understanding! O what, what a happiness is it to be quite satisfied that objects in the spiritual world are exactly as they are described in the Bible! for by being thus taught, one gets ready hold of the spiritual parts of scripture instruction, and fastens at once upon the enjoyment of them by faith. This is truly a present heaven. I wish you more than I have of it; though I have my share in its chartered graces and blessings; which I have now entered upon by holding the truth in love, and am thereby growing up into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ. In this view the Bible is inestimable. It is not only a perfect map of the spiritual world; but the believer, surveying its riches, and beauties, and pleasures, has a good warrant to say, All these are mine—for God is mine. I cannot tell you how great the happiness is, when the eternal Spirit opens, and applies, and puts the believer into the present enjoyment of the graces here promised, as so many earnests of the glory that is to be revealed. You know enough to make you join me in blessing and adoring our Sovereign Lord and God, who has given us in it, and by it, to taste how gracious he is. I have no words to describe the value of these mercies. My thoughts are quite lost in the survey of them. Why me? What was I? What am I? that this great charter of grace, with all its privileges and honours, should be by infinite mercy granted unto me. I daily sit me down in admiration, content with my Lord's own meditation upon the subject. Matt. xi. 25, 26, 27.

Mrs. R. sends her best wishes to Mrs. S. I remember her present case and wants. My Lord train up your children. May he give you to pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XLVI

March 4, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I am often with you at Heckfield, in the spirit of that good man who found himself happy in the happiness of others—"Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." I salute you, brother, and the church in your house. I have fellowship with you in our common Head. I feel the same spirit breathe through us, even the Spirit of our glorified Jesus, very remarkably giving us the same judgment, forming our hearts to the same affections, and influencing us to walk in the same way. Blessings on him for this great grace! As I see it, great it is indeed; for yet a little, very little while, it will grow to full perfection. And we shall have the same Spirit uniting us sensibly to the same Head, and giving us to receive out of his infinite fulness glory for glory: and this is the charity, love to the Head, and thereby love to the

members, which never faileth. It is waxing cold on the earth, as it was foretold; but they who live near to the sun still receive some of those enlivening beams which make the everlasting day. I have felt their influence, as you have done in your solitary hours; and I rejoice in hope that they will abound yet more and more in knowledge and sensible experience αἰσθησει. I sat down to thank you for your love and for its fruits. But I cannot help it—at once I am led by the streams to the Fountain-head. And I look upon it to be no injury to the streams, to say, they flow from such a fountain as covenant love. All the honey in the world could not sweeten my tea this morning, as receiving it from my Lord's grace, and using it to my Lord's glory—and the Morning Psalms wonderfully enriched the feast, 19, 20, 21,—three psalms in praise of his matchless beauty and infinite love. Truly, sir, there is something of heaven in the spiritual enjoyment of our creature comforts. Put Christ into them, and they are marvellously refined and exalted. I look at him in your gifts—the motive and the effect. You generously offer me a waggon load of potatoes. I thank you: but I have got two bushels from Mr. Howard, who first brought them to England, and have sent them to Mr. Taylor. When the season comes, I shall nevertheless accept your six sackfuls, cut and prepared. Before that time I live in hopes of seeing you face to face. Yet I may not forget another kindness; for which Mrs. R. desires we may join in thanking you.

I am become a great admirer of Phil. ii. 1—12. The dark ground sets off this delightful picture. O what times do we live in! Parties, disputes, quarrels, contentions, who shall be the greatest—yea, almost hatred itself in the family of love. We have much hearing, and little doing. The apostle James would be frightened to see the professors of the day, all ears, without hands or feet—nothing about them active, but a gossiping tongue. For these things I mourn, and preach, and pray; not without some profit. I see some love the gospel; and those that profess it make us live more at home—you at Heckfield, and I in London; yet I am as private as you. I very seldom go into any company; and when I do, I return to my study blessing God that I am once more alone: and this makes the haven, of which I have the prospect just before me, a very delightful appearance; because there, and only there, the wicked, ay, and wickedness, cease from troubling.

My dear friend, let me beg of you, so long as I am suffered to be upon this stormy sea, to have a constant interest in your prayers. I do not want to get into the harbour with full sail, but to get in. The how—the when—I leave. He knows best: and I am certain will do the best. Help me all you can, and approve yourself like Him who loveth unto the end. Mrs. R. desires kind remembrances to your partner. My blessing on all your children. The Lord be with you all; the fervent prayer of

W. Romaine.

LETTER XLVII.

May 11, 1787.

My dear Friend.—Miss P. dined with us yesterday, and made me quite ashamed of myself. A book, called "The Christian Remembrancer," was lying on the table. Upon her taking it up, she said she believed it was yours, of which I had no hint before. What! thought I, does Mr. S. write books faster than I can read them. I have not read *Horæ Solitariæ* yet, and I did not intend to write till I had gone through it, and could thank you for the second edition, as heartily or more than I did for the first. But I can refrain no longer: although I am indeed, sir, almost worn out, and good for nothing. My frame and my present feelings, the infirmities of mind and body, keep me very close to my last lesson. Every thing, within and without me, preaches to my heart the necessity of being saved freely and wholly by grace; and the blessedness of this lesson is by long experience become very precious. What could I do now, if it were otherwise? I cannot look back: no comfort there. Activity, vigour in working, liveliness, are over. It's true, I keep on public exercises; but they grow too

much for me. When I am quite jaded after a hard day—"It's time to spare yourself," say my friends. "What! still four times a week, and often five. Oh, it's not required of you!" No, it is not; but His love constrains me: it is as a thousand arguments, inspiring me with courage not to stop in showing forth his praises before men, which I hope soon to take up before saints and angels. Let the flesh complain—I owe it no favours—If it be tired with the praises of my Jesus—shame upon it, that it should ever be weary with the joys and glories of heaven. But weary it is—even now, the writing of this letter is a burden. I have dropped all my correspondents; and keep the little spirits that remain for public preaching. Nobody knows what I feel this morning; what uphill work it is, even to take up my pen, as I am in duty bound, and to acknowledge that I owe you so much, that, like a man over head and ears in debt, I am ashamed to meet my creditor. A letter from Heckfield, if not two. A very acceptable present from the farm. Six volumes of *Horæ Solitariæ*. Six volumes of *The Christian Remembrancer* (if it be yours). And what sum shall I put to that brotherly love, which was the fountain from whence these friendly streams flowed? May they flow on, and never, never stop! I believe they will not: they cannot. It is at this moment a blessed prospect, "Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." They all come from him; "All my fresh springs are in thee." Our love, with all its comforts, in thankfulness to him and kindness to one another, is from his infinite grace. To Him be all the glory of Heckfield favours. I am sure, the more we thank Him, the better we shall thank one another. Pray for me. Before I write again, I have two books to read, and cannot take them up till June the 25th. Perhaps I may see you before. The Master of the house bless the children; send you servants after his own heart; and fulfil all his purposes of grace to Mrs. S. and yourself. Mrs. R. joins with yours in every holy bond,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XLVIII.

Jan. 26, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—A. this week called, and dines with us to-day. He brought me nothing under your hand of your good wishes for the new year: but I give you full credit under my hand, that I am remembered by you, as I ought to be, and that my best wishes are not spared in prayer for you and yours. I am still "looking to Jesus;" our word for the year 1788. A present look to him will make this year much better entitled to *annus mirabilis*, than either the victory over the Spanish Armada, or the Revolution. They are gone and past; but ours is altogether wonderful: in its duration, an endless year; and in its blessings, more and greater than any heart can conceive—and heightened by the motive from which all comes—the eternal grace of the eternal Three. Proud Arminians may laugh at—Why me? But they in whom Jesus will be admired, can now see no reason in themselves: their true Spirit is self-loathing and self-abhorrence. Their one song is—"Worthy is the Lamb, &c." May this be sweeter melody in your heart every day—yea, may every look to Jesus throughout the year be more humbling to you and me, that we may be getting into a higher note of praise. And truly, sir, I can sing a little bit of G. Sol re ut in alt.

We are in great want of "The Christian Remembrancer." My sale of it has been very large—insomuch that Mrs. Trapp wonders what I do with them: it is a nice book to give or sell. It suits modern reading. If I had known the new edition was so forward, I would have proposed a new chapter; but it is too late. In my journeys through England last summer, I disposed of great numbers—and had frequent opportunities of reading it myself. Go on; and the Lord prosper you!

Having an opportunity of sending a parcel to my son this morning, I enclosed this little note, with my respects to Mrs. S. Am thankful our good Lord appeared again for her. Oh He is good, and doeth good. Desire her to look back, and see,

observe how he has led her hitherto. May she trust and not be afraid of his future guidance. To him I commend you all, and pray you to remember

W. Romaine.

LETTER XLIX.

March 8, 1788.

My dear Sir.—I know one that said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and I know his reason. He that said it is the giver of all blessings, even of liberality to give, and of thankfulness too for it, both in the giver and in the receiver. In nothing are we more like him than in bestowing, as he does, most freely and bountifully. Much faith in Him always works love to Him and to His. I feel, while I am writing, that I want a more thankful acknowledgment of Heckfield favours. Let me set some of them down, to brush up my memory. Mr. S.'s letters. Mrs. S.'s kind note. Six of the second edition of "The Christian Remembrancer." Mr. Matthews sent me "The Deep Things of God," &c. I cannot tell who I am to thank for it, but *ex pede Herculem.* All this is friendly enough; but the motive (of which I do not judge doubtfully) enhances every thing. I verily believe our intercourse is carried on by the Lord; and though you have got above me in some things, you have more to give: yet I may not yield to you in others. I have an infinite fulness to go to, to make and to keep me truly thankful. This I get as I want it: the prayer of faith brings in the grace, and is pleading for you and yours—that you may be the blessed of the Lord.

I mentioned a subject which I greatly desire to see treated by your pen. It is "on the profitable hearing of the word;" and should come in after the 36th chapter, p. 188. I need not tell you my reason. A creature, "all ear," has ceased to be a monster. Give them a word in season. Certainly the gospel is heard for better purposes, when it is mixed with faith, than to be only the pleasant voice of a sweet singer, which neither administers food, nor nourishment, nor growth. Do, sir, oblige me with a little chapter there, on the character of a profitable hearer of the gospel. If I do not see you before, I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in April. In the mean time pray for

W. Romaine.

Mrs. R. says, I have not expressed her thankfulness so strong as I ought. I mention this at her request.

LETTER L.

June 12, 1788.

My dear Friend.—Our time is fixed for coming into your neighbourhood; of which I acquaint you early, in hopes it may suit you to admit us under your roof. But you will be quite free to tell us of your engagements, that we may not break in upon any of them. We expect to be at Reading about the latter end of this month, and will inform you of the day when I hear from you. Our Lord is exceeding gracious to me in all things, in hand and in promise: he makes me admire his infinite bounty, giving me to repeat David's words, with some of David's spirit, Psalm xxxiv. 1, 2, 3.

Pray for me, as I do for you and yours, that we may all hold on our way rejoicing. I am, in our dearest Jesus, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LI.

Dec. 22, 1788

My dear Friend.—I have your Remembrancer by me, and I send you mine for the next year. Accept it, and use it, that it may help the exercise of

brotherly love. It has been long my *Vade Mecum;* for in the blank memorandum part I record the memorables, temporal and spiritual, of the day. I find the review always humbles, always exalts, God's mercies; and as to the present time, it is certainly good to try to fasten something to the flying moments, which may hinder them from running to waste, especially when they have almost done their flight, as they have with me. What should I do now without Christ! Much time to redeem—every earthly help failing—and these few days are in all respects evil—private—public—church—state. Oh what Κακία! as our Lord calls it. Happy for us, he is on the throne, and ruleth right. Our word for 1789 is to be, "The Lord reigneth," Jehovah Jesus, over all worlds and over all creatures; and to him every knee shall, willingly or unwillingly, bow. My dear friend, remember me in an especial manner on New-year's day, that when I speak of the character of our Royal Sovereign, the King of kings, of the nature of his government, and of the peculiar happiness of his subjects, I may be enabled to speak, in some measure, suitable to his fame and high renown. You know one who saw a great deal more of him than any one of us do, and who spoke with admiration—"Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?" Because he could not, he did not give over praising. Oh no! he never stopped; he is at it still: through the ages of eternity he will be blessing God and the Lamb. I am living in hopes it will not be long before I shall join him; and his subject of praise, which is mine now, will be mine then. The prospect is big with blessings. I am desired to return thanks to Mrs. S. for her kind present. Christmas mercies be hers, and yours, and all your children's. In the present ferment, I find a sweet retreat in my study, and much refreshment in conversing with my best friend. All my politics are with him. Psalm cix. 4. The words cannot be translated, as you know. The more I get into the spirit and practice of them, the more I shall be your friend and servant, in Jehovah Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LII.

Reading, *June*, 1789.

Dear Sir.—All the family present thanks; we took a great deal of pains to bring them ourselves, but could not succeed: my son was all the morning trying to get a chaise, but could not. I am forced to acknowledge your bounty to us to-day, by favour of Lawrence, and by whom I inform you that we are still in hopes to come and take our leave of the favoured Heckfield, where I have spent many days very pleasantly, and with whose inhabitants I hope to spend many more, even more than can be told by multiplication. The good Lord has called you to another place. It is his will: it is his work you are to do. He has given you talents; I am to pray for his blessing upon the use of them; that the public, yourself, your family, your friends, may be profited by your present station; and among the rest,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LIII.

Dec. 18, 1789.

My dear Friend.—I think it right to acknowledge the receipt of twelve books from Mr. Trapp, by your order; and also to thank you for your good advice to the growing generation, which was never more wanted than at this day. The spirit of the times runs strong against all subordination; even the first commandment with promise, "Honour thy father and thy mother," &c. is losing its authority daily. I have great need to follow your book with my prayers; and I do. May it please our sovereign Lord to accompany the reading of it with his effectual power. May the young learn subjection to all their

superiors, in the family, in the state, and in the church; so that the times may be quieter in our land than I fear they will be.

You are waiting: it is not lost time: I have found it very teaching, and very profitable. Put the Lord in, and it will be blessed waiting. "My soul, wait thou only upon the Lord," &c. May this be your present Heckfield lesson; and, as to the event of what you wait for, it is in his hands who can make no mistakes: subjection to his will is heaven.

Mrs. R. remembers you and all yours, especially Mrs. S., with affection; so does

W. Romaine.

LETTER LIV.

April 12, 1790.

My very dear Friend.—I was thinking this morning what excuse I could make for not acknowledging a very acceptable present, and for not answering a friendly note with it, long ago. Like most of us, very glad to receive favours, but tardy in giving of thanks, I was for laying it upon more business than I was become equal to, having very nearly attained that late period of life, in which Moses says (and I feel it), Psal. xc. 10, our utmost efforts are pain and weariness, both of mind and body. Our strength is really to sit still. And a blessed lesson it is, when, human efforts ceasing, we are led to make the works of Jesus all our salvation, and to find by happy experience that it is become all our desire. Oh what a good time has he lived to, whether he be young or old, who is dying in this faith!

But when I had written this excuse down, and read it, I was quite ashamed of it, because it confuted itself. It savoured a good deal of their practice (Gen. iii.), who sought to lay the blame upon any thing rather than themselves; for, indeed, most excuses are lies. An indolent temper, when what must be done of necessary preparation for public preaching was over, unwilling to set about other things; wanting to relax; and too often easing the mind by that spirit by which many trespass upon God's goodness; delaying from day to day; I will write to-morrow; or, what signifies it when I do write; I shall say nothing that will be worth postage. All my former excuses failed me this morning, April 12th; and I now cry *Peccavi*. I have got to the true cause: forgive me this wrong. I am to thank you for a Christian Remembrancer of this last edition, finely bound, for Mrs. Romaine. Better late than never to repent and amend. In these troublesome times I find it good to follow Habakkuk's example, which is all the politics I wish to know: he prayed, he got into his watch-tower, and waited for an answer; and he received it, and praised God for it. I am doing the same for the public—at prayers for the church, groaning under an oppression harder than the Chaldean bondage. I pray on; but am still in my watch-tower—I can get no answer—one can see no end of the present troubles—the cause is not removed: therefore they continue; they increase, as if so many fiends of hell were let loose, and suffered to do all the mischief which Satan himself could wish. We know where to lay the blame: unbelief is the provoking sin; it has brought ruin upon many great kingdoms; so that we can trace the vengeance of heaven against it from age to age, down to the present miseries of Europe. Infidelity led the way —"We will not have this man to reign over us:" then he left them to themselves; upon which Antichrist, that is, Apollion, brought out his legions and armies to destroy; and they have destroyed all law, order, property, religion; insomuch, that the earth is made by them like another hell. I tremble; for who takes warning? Oh! my country, my country! I fear for England. We are not much unlike the kingdom of France—very near her in her sin, and may not be far from her in her punishment. Therefore I keep me in my watch-tower, praying and pleading for mercy, begging our Lord to spare us for his own name's sake. This is my only plea. Are we better than they? It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. May these move him to

pour upon us a spirit of prayer and supplication, that, as a nation, we may with national repentance keep the 19th instant, humbled under his mighty hand. This is such a fast as he hath chosen; and for his own glory may he work a general reformation, that iniquity may not be our ruin. I hope you will keep me company in my watch-tower; then especially; but at all times there to plead for you and yours

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LV.

July 8, 1790.

MY DEARLY BELOVED.—Let brotherly love continue and increase. I have to congratulate Mrs. S. and you on the success of the Rev. Mr. ——. He rejoices me in hearing of his present situation, and in hope of his success in it. We hope to set out from London soon after the 18th instant; and, if it be quite agreeable, we purpose to visit friends at Heckfield in the course of that week. If no objection be made, we shall be at Reading, and will make our time and circumstances known unto you. The favour of a line to Blackfriars will be an additional obligation to the multitude already conferred on your true friend, and humble servant in Christ,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LVI.

Dec. 15, 1790.

DEAR SIR.—My son has been coming down for a long time, but he has been detained. I waited to send my acknowledgments by him, not thinking they were worth postage. You know we then do the best when Jesus gets all the praise. I hope in your leisure hours, in some of these wet days, you have him still in your eye, and are putting down some of your thoughts concerning Him and His.* I have a hand in them, as far as prayer can go; and that with him is a great way. James v. 16. Mrs. R. is not behind in our love to Mrs. S. and in respects to the family. Truly yours in Him,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LVII.

Saturday, 2 o'clock.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—We are at prayers for the sick of your family. My Doctor is the best, because he cures infallibly and eternally. To his care I am commending Mrs. S. and Miss Ann, and hoping he will prosper R.'s advice and medicine, as he did to Mary, in whose recovery we all rejoice and are thankful. I am the scribe, because I would request, for Christ his sake, a constant remembrance in your prayers for myself, that I may finish my course with joy—and my farther testimony for Jesus, in my Triumph of Faith, may be to his glory; whose I am, and whom I serve. Yours in Him,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LVIII.

SOUTHAMPTON, *Oct.* 18, 1791.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.—I have a great desire to take sweet counsel with you concerning my present studies; and thankfully accept of your kind invitation

* Alluding to a book, entitled, The Church of God.

to spend a day or two with you for that purpose. We hope to be able to get to Heckfield the 25th instant, in the evening, but do not wish to trouble you for your chaise: it will be more convenient, on many accounts, to take a chaise at Basingstoke. The family here desire to be, with due respect, remembered to you: Mrs. R. joins me in my best wishes to you, and to Mrs. S. and to all the family. My Lord has been teaching me some of my last lesson. He is taking down this earthly tabernacle; but he does it like himself—gently—lovingly—with no more pain than as he enables me to say—all is well. May he vouchsafe us a happy meeting by the way—and the best at last: so prays

W. Romaine.

LETTER LIX.

Jan. 14, 1792.

My dear Friend.—You will give me credit, farther than you have heard or seen, that I have not forgot your kindness. I also thank One for the full conviction that it was a love of his teaching which inspires your heart and mine, and that it will not end when faith and hope have done their perfect work. Glory be to him in the highest!

I am spending two or three days at Tottenham, and so get time to acknowledge my debts, which I never can get in London. What with much preaching, and many works of charity, I live there for the public; and I do not regret it, because my time is short, and I would labour while it is day. I have reached the 11th chapter of the Revelation, with much comfort to myself: I dare not say, that I have given the whole mind of the Holy Spirit; but, according to my light, I have delivered nothing contrary to it: the most difficult parts of the book are to come; but I am looking up for his teaching who can lead me into all truth: he is my commentator; for all the rest have failed me. Help me in your prayers, as well as with your hints (which I value much), that this my last preaching may be the best.

Our word, for this year, was—Grow in grace—what grace is—favour, free favour—a cool breeze after a sultry day, as refreshing as the dew upon herbs—for to these favour is compared.

What growth is—an increase of the favour of God, by the increasing knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: so I read the words—grow in the grace, and in the knowledge, &c. by the Spirit, through faith in the word; prayer over it; more dependence on the faithfulness and power of God to fulfil it. In this view I wished my people and you a growing year. May much of the rain and shining of heaven upon the good seed make it bring forth a hundredfold, in London and Heckfield, to the praise of the sower, who is the Son of man.

Black clouds and great storms are gathering: but nothing but a full persuasion of this could make us lift up our heads with joy. He has told us that these latter days would be the worst. So it is. infidelity triumphs: the fancied rights of men usurp the rights of God: republicanism throws off subjection to God's ordinance; and every unbeliever is a king, *sui juris*. Happy for us, the government is upon his shoulders, who can and will get himself glory by fulfilling Psal. lxviii. 1, 2. Read the Hebrew: the verbs are in the future tense: v. 3. is our support and stay in these tempests. You will not fail to pray for me, that I may be kept by his mighty power, through faith, till I come to the blessed end—to see my Jesus face to face. To him I commend you and yours, with Mrs. R.'s Christian love, being in this one respect, without guile, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LX.

READING, *Jan.* 19, 1792.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.—I sit down only to tell you that I feel for you. I remember Mrs. H., a friend of ours, had a room full of the pictures of infants Mrs. R. asked her one day, as they had been all her children, and all dead, why she let them hang there. She answered, "It is the same thing between our Saviour and me, whether he has them, or I have them." This is a great saying; yet, it is in fact no more than we are daily praying for—"Thy will be done!" It is soon said: but when the will of the flesh is opposed, it is not so soon practised. Indeed, submission to God's will is an almighty work, which you know as well as I do, and perhaps feel more of it at this time. But through the Spirit of Jesus, when we feel this rebellion, we are commanded to look to "Our Father which art in heaven." In Christ he is ours—his fatherly love is ours—and he can do nothing but what is for our good. And his opportunity of manifesting it, is chiefly when his will goes one way, and our will goes another. Then we are forced to look up for his promised strength, and, we generally find, he appears most for us. He tries faith, purifies it in the furnace, continues it in the fire, that patience may bring fresh experience; and experience improves that hope which never makes the believer ashamed. See these truths most beautifully illustrated in the case of David: I never read it without getting some good from it; for there one sees before one's eyes that faith and patience may have their perfect work. Mrs. R. is concerned with you for the loss of her dear god-daughter Jane; she was God's gift. He allowed you to enjoy it for above twelve years. He hath taken her to himself; and he hath done what is right, what is best, for you and for her: to his name be all the glory. Mrs. R. joins in affectionate remembrance to Mrs. S. with

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LXI.

SOUTHAMPTON, *Oct.* 6, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER.—I am desired by several friends who have read the inclosed, to beg the favour of you to let them reprint it. But, as there was something local in the first publication, they thought it best, and so do I, that it should be submitted to you, whether you would give them leave; and if you did, whether some things might not be omitted, to make it so small as to be cheaper, and spread abroad more. It is their purpose to have it printed at Bath by Mr. Hazard, and to be sold, if they can, for two-pence, or, at most, for three-pence. In my judgment only one thing is wanting to make it as full as one would wish on this subject *******. I know you can answer this, and to satisfaction. Mr. T., my host, salutes you, and so does Mrs. R., who, thank God, is at present in perfect health.

And let us know particularly how Mrs. S. and all the family are at present. I have enjoyed some of the choicest blessings this summer in my meditations on the Triumph of Faith. Experience prospers, although the written part goes on slowly. Much preaching, wherever I have been, has kept it back. And it is the same thing whether he be exalted in the preached, or in the printed gospel, so his Spirit do but favour the work. Fresh supplies of his grace are as needful as fresh breath. May his blessed inspiration guide you, and bless you in all things. So prays,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LXII.

Nov. 19, 1792.

My very dear Friend.—I remember you and your family, recommending you all to my Doctor, whose hand is not shortened: he still cures all manner of sickness; and his praise is above heaven and earth for standing miracles of mercy. Can there be greater than you and I? Oh magnify the Lord with me; and let us exalt his name together. The books which come with this, and which I promised you, will, I hope, help to show you fresh wonders of his grace. They are the only copies I have, and shall be glad to have them returned, but not in haste. Since I came home, so many engagements, that I rather live the Triumph of Faith than write it: but still he is kept in his right place, and he makes all within me to speak of his glory. To him I commend you and yours, being by him and in him your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXIII.

Reading, *Tuesday Morning.*

My dear Friend.—We accept of your kind invitation to beloved Heckfield, and wish to see your chaise on Monday next at twelve o'clock: next week being the only time we have to spare this year; and, my great journey being almost over, it may be my last visit.

Oh how faithful is he who keepeth for us the appointed weeks of harvest! Blessings on him, that ordinances are our constant preachers, encouraging us to trust and not be afraid. May his choicest favours be on you and yours, Mrs. S. &c., and on your reverend guest. So prays one and all of this family, as well as

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXIV.

Jan. 16, 1794.

My dear Friend.—Having an opportunity of sending thanks by a parcel to my son, I embrace it gladly, although I have only time to mention your last book, handsomely bound, to Mrs. R. and myself, accompanied with a letter more worth than all the rest. Thank you for all the rest, and for brotherly love. The report of Mr. I. is very false; he has sent me extracts of sermons lately preached, and I have given it under my hand, that he is not an Arian nor a Socinian. It is much to be lamented that such vile slanders should be raised and spread. Our motto is, "The God of Hope," Rom. xv. 13. I have preserved the substance of the sermon, and will send it you in due time. It was only a comment on the verse. My prayers for all the family. Pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXV.

Letters to J—— I—— Esq. with several to Mrs. I——.

Oct. 19, 1782.

My dear Sir.—Our common friend Mr. A. is coming to meet you. I could not neglect the opportunity by him of acknowledging your last favour, with the inclosed Address to the Freeholders of Somerset. It is seasonable and well-judged; becoming a true lover of his country. I wish success may crown your endeavours; but I have no reason to expect it. There are but two spirits

that divide the world. One is predominant in our land and day, insomuch that the love of the public is lost. Self is the great idol, self-interest is the ruling principle, and self-enjoyment the universal end; of which our mock patriots have given us dreadful proof. From them nothing can be hoped for, whether in or out, but mischief: the corruption of their principles in religion can lead them to nothing in practice but what is ruinous in church and state. But bad as the prospect is, we must not be discouraged in doing our duty: you in your station, and I in mine, should take the more pains. Whatever may be the event to others, we shall both be better for our endeavours; and perhaps you may succeed with your fellow-subjects And I have some reason to wait for success from my friend—He is the great Patriot—He teaches—He gives patriotism. The whole world cannot make a public-spirited man without him. In this light I view him as the sun in the firmament—the greatest friend that mankind could possibly have. He is the Saviour—He makes private persons, as well as states, happy—He saves from all kinds of miseries what the sinner may suffer in himself, and what he may make others suffer. To him I am looking in the use of means, as you are for national deliverance from our open enemies, and from our sham patriots. From him also I expect the revival of public spirit: he alone can save from self and selfishness. Oh that he may put forth his power! unless he do, you will not get twelve counties to build twelve ships of war. We are asleep, though in a storm—in danger, but insensible—by quarrels at home, strengthening the hands of our enemies abroad. A wide field of lamentation is before me;—but I stop: he shall hear the remainder who can save a sinking land.

W. ROMAINE.

I have a fresh confirmation of an old promise, "Thou shalt visit thy tabernacle, and shalt find nothing amiss." Oh, he is a good, a precious Jesus.

LETTER LXVI.

Dec. 14, 1782.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—I never was more obliged to you than for your Christian sympathy with us in this time of need. It is a great trial: but it is the Lord who has a right to do what he will with his own. It is *my* Lord, *my* old Friend, who changeth not in his love: he has acted for his own glory, and has done the best. What would I more? Nothing, but his grace to make me submit to his sovereign will; and that, blessings on him! he does now freely vouchsafe; for I feel a will of my own quite opposite to his. I could wish he would have spared my son: my soul delighted in him: he was a sweet youth. The remembrance of his person and manners and behaviour; his dutifulness (for he never offended me but once in his life); his conduct since he was in the army—these draw tears from mine eyes while I am writing. I do feel as a parent. I am no stoic, but, thanks be to my good God, his grace conquers nature. The struggle is hard; but God is with me; and through him I conquer myself: he forces me to go to him every moment for his support and his comforts. I have no stock of resignation. It is out of myself, laid up in the fulness of Jesus; and while I live upon him for it, he helps me to kiss the rod. He keeps under my rebel will, and teaches me to say from my heart, "Not my will, Lord, but thine, be done." Such is the kindness of my Jesus; for which I adore and worship him.

My poor wife has exquisite feelings on this occasion. It is her constant prayer not to be suffered to displease our Lord by her murmurings. However willing the spirit may be to kiss the rod, yet the flesh is weak. The tender bowels of the mother rise, and struggle; but the power of grace prevails. In the midst of her greatest floods of tears, she would cry out—"Lord, keep me! Lord save me from thinking or speaking any thing contrary to thy holy will." And he was very good to her, her faith was supported.

I have many things to write, but have not leisure; only to add once more, that

we are, from our very hearts, sensible of your remembrance of us. May the good Lord sanctify to you all he gives, and all he takes away, and bless you abundantly for your kindness to

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXVII.

Feb. 1, 1783.

My very dear Friend.—I take the first opportunity of answering your friendly letter. You have full credit for all your professions of mourning with those that mourn: we believe your sympathy, and we bless God for it. The prayers of our friends for us have been heard and answered. Mrs. R., considering her feelings, has been very graciously dealt with; kept at the worst from murmuring, and generally calm and composed. We had friends many, and from them prayers many: but you know that when two strings of an instrument strike a unison, they are in concord. Just so was it with Mrs. I.'s letter: it was then, and is still, in unison with Mrs. R.'s spirit. It sounded a concord; it met the very sentiments of her heart, and became, not a prescription, but an effectual medicine to her wound. It was not a letter about the balm of Gilead; but it brought and administered the healing virtue. It does not at all lessen Mrs. I.'s real friendship, but more endears it, that God gave to her words so great a blessing: they came from love; they have increased love; and to this moment Mrs. R. never speaks of them without great thankfulness I am commissioned from her to bless Mrs. I. for her kindness.

You are very obliging in wishing us at Brislington; but my circumstances are such, and my helps in preaching so very few, that I cannot think of so long a journey. My work is great; and the night will soon come when it will be over: I wish to be faithful and successful these few hours of the evening which are left. If I see you not face to face, I am still, in office, your constant orator: my Lord will hear much of you, and I will please myself with the persuasion that I shall often meet you at his throne. I invite Mr. T. to give me a meeting there; the oftener the better.

Our word for this year was, Judges vi. 24, "Jehovah Shalom," Jehovah is our peace. It was something remarkable that it should so soon have a literal accomplishment. Peace being broken between God and man, the breach was made up by our great Peace-maker. The gospel is the open proclamation of it, inviting sinners to be reconciled to God, and to enjoy the benefits of a free trade between heaven and earth. They who are justified by faith are reconciled, and find this peace with God: and, as far as they believe, they enjoy the benefits of an open intercourse with God in Christ; which benefits are all the graces of time, and all the glories of eternity. I have only to wish that the outward peace may promote the inward, and the Peace-maker himself may get the glory of this and of all his goodness to the children of men.

My blessing on your dear children. May they be kept for you, and you for them! Mrs. I.'s great attention to them is her duty; and being paid in the Lord is her privilege. Prayer for success is the chief thing: he only, yea, he only, can bless instruction. May the parents and their friends plead much and prevail.

W. Romaine

LETTER LXVIII.

June 28, 1783.

My dear Friend.—I have yours before me of the 23rd instant. You are still; and your concerns are on my mind, and on my heart. I feel with you, and rejoice with you. When you prosper, it is better with me. I get a fresh subject of praise, and find it a pleasant thing to carry your thanks to my

Master. May he be with you all at Lyme, and bless means for the good of the body. When we meet, may he consecrate your house afresh, and make it such a church as Aquila and Priscilla had in their house. It has been, and I hope will be. We have no plan about our summer journey; but think it will not be quite convenient for us to travel westward till the latter end of August. Mrs. R. is at present very much out of order—feverish—a sore throat. Saturday morning: I am writing at six o'clock—and will go no farther till the doctor comes.

He is come, and says he hopes there is no danger; but symptoms are not so good as he could wish. He is the Lord of life and death—in his hands we trust our all. He commands us also to do it at all times. I am learning this lesson, and recommending it much. What I know of it, practically, puts one into a real paradise: because it puts one, and keeps one, in God's will. He graciously appointed it to be a sovereign antidote against all evil, and to be his ordinance for conveying all blessings: for which reason, I write and preach so much about it. The fulness is in Christ; but there is no hand that can receive any thing from him but faith: and faith should go as far as the promise: it should trust for life—the life that now is, and whatever belongs to it, as well as for the next. Oh, my dear friend, let me intreat you to read this attentively and as the subject requires. I wish you always happy, in all things happy: Christ is the only way to this; and you can get nothing from him without faith; and faith is not doing what it should do, if it does not save you from guilty fears, and from natural fears. Mind the promise—"I will save you from all your sins"—no fear from this quarter: so again—"Lest any hurt you (person or thing), I will keep you night and day." No fear from this quarter: almighty love has promised, come what may, it shall not hurt. I harp so much upon this string, because I know you have fears, and they do give you uneasiness; which I earnestly wish to cure. My friendship wants you to be so happy as to be always rejoicing in the Lord. And yet mine is but a ray of his friendship. Surely, then, you may trust him, and not be afraid of any thing. Yea, you may, and you ought, to sing, "God is our hope and strength: we have found him a very present help in trouble." I would go on, but I must take notice of your letter. When I come, I am ready to do any body's duty—to relieve Mr. G. and Mr. T. My love to them both.

Poor Mr. B.! I pity every man who follows his own will; for then the blind lead the blind: now he has got into the ditch, may it be sanctified. He has great reason now to follow my Lord's will; and if he does, he will have ample matter of repentance both before God and man. I pray this may be given him.

Have you taken notice of an uncommon phenomenon? It was never once so in my life. Since last Monday, we have had a continual foggy air—the sun shining, but not able to disperse the vapour, mist, or whatever it was. The sun appears like a red-hot piece of iron. No wind. I thought, at first, it had been our smoke: but a gentleman from Buckingham, informs me it was the same there. On this occasion, there are many fears ahroad; but my Lord spake to the point, and I give him perfect credit. Thus saith the Lord, "Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them; for the customs of the people are vain." I thank him for this cordial: for, I assure you, the appearances of the sky are very alarming: but blessed are they who put their trust in him. May he keep you and Mrs. I. and your beloved children, not only from all evil, hut also from the fear of it. This is a part of his salvation. May we receive it by faith, and use it to his glory! To him, &c.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LXIX.

TIVERTON, *Aug.* 20, 1783.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.—We arrived here, through the good hand of my God, in safety: by which means I have learned something more of my first lesson;

that is, to trust, and not be afraid. What has he to fear who has cast all his care upon an Almighty friend? And has done it at his bidding, and on the warrant of his promise? Every step of our journey spoke aloud—Now you see he is faithful—He said, I will keep your going out, and your coming in—And blessings on him, he has kept us from all evil. Mr. I., no one has a better title than you have—to trust at all times, to trust for all things. May you live up to your estate, and find your faith working such a love to God on your heart as will cast out all fear that hath torment.

In my journey, I have also met with nothing but what has increased thankfulness. The fine weather, the fruits of the earth, very rich, and ripe, and abundant, and the harvest very near over—these are special mercies, calling aloud for praise. The poor and the rich should alike join; for both are benefited by the present plenty. Wheat, lately nine shillings at this market, was yesterday, the best, sold at five shillings and six-pence. Glory be to God!

I have a magnifying glass, through which I view these mercies, and they appear great indeed. Looking upon them in a spiritual light—oh what an improvement! He that has kept my body in safety has the care of my soul: he has undertaken it: his love, his power, his wisdom, are all engaged. And he says to me what David did to Abiathar, "Abide thou with me: fear not; for he that seeks to destroy thy life must destroy mine first: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard." Corruptions, temptations, dangers, pains, may attack and threaten; but faith says, Fear not; his word is passed—it cannot be broken—I will preserve thee from all evil—yea, I will preserve thy soul; I will perfect that which concerneth thee.

When this is believed as it ought to be, what a subject of praise! Many, many blessings I have in hand; but they increase by use, and they are but earnests: God gives them as his pledges. Take this, and expect greater—the greatest—all my love in Christ—all my heaven. This is but the first fruits: the harvest shall follow. When present mercies are viewed in this light, oh how they increase—how they magnify! May every day, as it adds to their number, add also to their value; that, in all things, you and I may be giving of thanks; of which heavenly employment nothing can hinder us but unbelief. Take heed of that bitter root, and set Christ upon it. Mind; he must pardon it, and subdue it, or else it will shoot up and flourish.

Mr. G. informs me that he would wish to be released before the 31st instant; to which I heartily consent, only reminding you of my parting request, that he would occupy my pulpit as long as he stays in town. My brotherly love to him; and my prayers follow him for success in all that he takes in hand. I hope to revisit you in the Lord on the 29th or 30th instant: we have had some cold mornings, which made me think in earnest of the sea-side. Our joint love, with every good wish of it, to your dear children. Although I am out of office, yet it is still my privilege to keep on praying for you and Mrs. I. I desire to do it more, and better. And I am thankful to my best friend, who hitherto has heard and answered. I am in the Lord, your real friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXX.

Blackfriars, *March* 26, 1784.

My dear Friend.—I am thankful for the good news which you sent me from a far country. Next to the gospel, it was welcome. Mrs. I. and the children and yourself preserved in health, is a great mercy. Adored be his goodness. I gave you an account of the weather with us, till a little before the solstice: then the frost set in severe, and, excepting a day or two, we have had snow and cold, till the equinox; and even now the wind is in the north-east, and as cold a March as ever I remember. Scarce any appearance of spring yet: my crocuses are but just blowing. Your letter of the 11th of February is before me. I am obliged

to you for your intelligence concerning the old preacher. It is good to do all that we can for Christ: but nothing is good which is not done in faith, in his strength, and to his glory.

I hope this will find you before you leave Montpellier, and ease your mind about your hot-house. Mrs. R. joins me in wishing you all a prosperous journey, under the guidance of my Lord, and a happy meeting in London. Trust him. He says, "Lest any hurt you, I will keep you night and day." To his keeping I commend you and yours, and am in him truly yours,

W. Romaine.

I have no news to send you: our politics are like the wind: we are ever changing. The effects of materialism begin to be felt. They are the same in states as in private persons. Self reigneth; and then God and his Christ are dethroned. My system begins with "the Lord reigneth." It goes on, every step, with "the Lord reigneth." And whatever opposes it, must come down; for he has all power in heaven and in earth: "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth for ever and ever." In such times as the present, nothing can quiet the spirit, or settle the mind in perfect peace, but that this Lord is my Lord: under his care he has me and mine. Come what may, all is safe in his hands. A poor helpless sinner, who has committed himself to the Saviour's keeping, may, and ought, to sing that reviving hymn, Isaiah xxvi. 1, 2, 3, 4, in all troubles, and in the hour of death. To him again I commend you and yours.

LETTER LXXI.

Blackfriars, *Sept.* 14, 1784.

My very dear Friend.—I received your kind remembrance of us just before we set out for the North; and attended to your request of hearing from me on the journey; but my yearly engagement would not allow me leisure till this day. I have made it a long time my practice, as soon as St. Dunstan's lecture is over, to begin reading my Bible; and I let nothing take me off till I have read it through. Yesterday, I finished my delightful task; and having blessed my God for his precious word, I take up my pen to write first to you. The impressions left upon my heart in this last perusal are so warm and lively, that I cannot help communicating them to you, and wishing that you and Mrs. I. may feel the same. My admiration has been increasing of the uniformity of the scripture plan. It is the great charter of grace; and all the parts perfectly harmonize: and when one compares them together, each illustrates and beautifies the whole.

The reading of 1784 has also given me a fresh confirmation of the truth of scripture. I am not more certain of any thing than that it is the word of God, and the revelation of the Most High: and of this I am convinced, by finding the power of God accompany it. As in the first, so in the new creation—He speaks, and it is done: his word is almighty. I know of no power beyond that which he has put forth in your heart and mine. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. Our new birth is a new creation; and, blessings on him! I feel the effects of this every time I take up my Bible: I find it to be more than the word of man. It is in truth the word of God; because it effectually worketh to this day in them that believe. Its influence in the heart and life is beyond all created power: and the experience of God's real presence in and by his word has made it to me very precious. On this last reading, my love for it has grown much in taste and value—in taste, sweeter than honey—in value, more than gold, yea, than much fine gold. As I dig deeper, the mine becomes rich, and the treasures of grace are greatly enhanced by their being the earnests of glory. Oh what a book is this! What! is any way like it? I cannot get enough of it. You know, it is a good sign of health when people long for their meals; so it is in the mind. I have but just done reading, and yet I want to begin again: my appetite is keener. Feeding upon the word is not like the gross meat and drink

of this world—nothing cloying in it: but when mixed with faith it refines the faculties, and exhilarates the spirits. The man says, "O what love have I unto thy law! All the day long is my study and my delight in it."

All these considerations have received great confirmation in my last searching of the scriptures; because I have got one year nearer to the full accomplishment of all God's promises. This vastly enhances their value. Yet a very, very little while—and perfection and eternity will be put to their fulfilment. The word will be completed—perfectly in all its promises—eternally in all its glories. Oh what a day will that be! What Joshua said, will be matter of fact: Josh. xxi. 25; xxiii. 14, 15. All things in this world, when near, look great. As you go from them, they appear less. It is the property of true faith to bring the promises near: as faith grows by hearing and reading, the promises appear nearer and greater. The home prospect familiarizes them, and presents them to our view with fresh beauties. Believe me, Sir, this is matter of fact. The eye affects the heart, and all its affections taste and enjoy the good things of Immanuel's land: which, though they be at present in promise and hope, yet the promises of them, exceeding great and exceeding precious, mixed with suitable faith, excite a hope full of glory and immortality.

This view of the Bible is inexpressibly glorious. It reveals; it realizes; it brings into present enjoyment eternal things. It is my constant prayer for B. friends, that they may be bible Christians. All besides is vanity.

I told you the design of my journey. It was answered. God is unspeakably good to me and to mine. Our meeting was in his name and fear: we profited. And we parted in love, just as they did (Acts xx. 36, 37, 38), to meet again in a better country.

The harvest is fine. He reserveth for us the appointed weeks, &c. He is good. I am going to keep my harvest-home, and for one to bless his bounty. Our feast is Sept. 25. Remember us on that day. Mrs. I., Miss Louisa—none of our Bristol friends shall be left out. Mr. T. not passed by. My dear partner will join. I have many letters to write; but yours, being first, is not the least, neither in love nor size. Every bible blessing be yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXII.

Nov. 30, 1784.

My dear Friend.—I am to thank you for your constant kind remembrance of us; for which giving you perfect credit, you will not be offended that I look higher in my thanks. We ought not to live upon the streams; but they should lead us up to the fountain-head from whence they flow. The bountiful giver should be acknowledged in all his gifts, whether they come immediately from himself or from his creatures. And this is his way, both to sanctify friendship and to secure it. Most friendships are ropes of sand: they love to-day, and hate to-morrow; because they leave God out. But bringing him into all our connexions with one another, he renders them holy, and thereby lasting. Indeed, this is the life I am wishing and trying to make some daily progress in: and truly nothing else is worth living for. You may safely write vanity on all worldly comforts, if they be not spiritualized. But God in them exalts, ennobles them, and turns their cold water into rich wine. To his praise be it spoken. I have supped in Mrs. N.'s room on bread and cheese and cider; and it was fulfilled, "So man did eat angels' food." Your grounds are pleasant. Walking alone, to converse with God, they have been turned into a paradise. How many, many times has it been with me as with Isaac. He went out to pray in the field at the even-tide; and while he prayed, he lift up his eyes and saw Rebecca: he asked, and had. How infinitely gracious his promise! How infallibly faithful his performance! Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. My dear friend Mr. I., this is really something of heaven: a blessedness that I wish God may add to all your other enjoyments. It will multiply them: you will have two in one—and what no estate, no relations, no

comforts can give. This will do you good at your latter end, when they must all fail. One, from whom I wish to learn this lesson, reduces it to this point—I have set the Lord always before me: always at home, or abroad—in company, or alone—writing letters, or reading them—eating or drinking, sleeping or walking, sick or well—sick unto death, yea, dying—I would still be looking to Jesus. It is my safety, my privilege, my happiness, to do all in his presence. So his example teaches. So his Spirit will enable you and me to follow his steps. As believers, we shall be aiming at it, and trying daily to do it better: for when we are reconciled to the Father, and at friendship with him in his Son, we ought then to exercise our faith and hope in him on all occasions. What do we trust our souls for in his hands if we do not trust our bodies? How do we cast all our care upon him if we do not live in perfect dependence on him for our children and families? He has the government of church and state upon his heart and upon his shoulders. Oh why, then, do we doubt of his managing both for the best? He has undertaken the care of seed-time and harvest. How injurious is it to him to burthen ourselves with his own proper business; especially when he says, Cast thy burden on the Lord! But it is bad weather. He appoints cloudy days, as well as sunshine: I quiet myself in his will, be it wet or fair; and thereby enjoy a sweet calm, when the face of the sky is tempestuous, and the wind stormy; although, of late, he has been so gracious in his providence as to give us such fine weather as no man living remembers in October and November; saying, as it were, Trust, and be not afraid: if you have a wet cold summer, I will give you summer weather in winter. I reckon twenty-four fine days in October, and twenty-two in November. What a God! I admire his goodness to a set of people who are at every turn murmuring at and affronting him for his management of the weather. This present autumn should silence all such complaints. And when the winter comes in earnest—cold, and frost, and snow, and north-east winds—they all fulfil his word. Thereby they exercise faith, and improve thankfulness. Lord, lift thou but up the light of thy countenance, and it is Midsummer. I can assure you, Sir, that these are not only realities, but also blessings to be enjoyed: and I wish you to partake richly of them. The Lord's presence will brighten your fair days, and will enlighten your darkness. Troubles come—he will make them big with mercies; death comes—he will be with you; and dying, by his grace, shall only be the entrance, safe, pleasant entrance, into life everlasting. O my Jesus! teach Mr. I., teach Mrs. I., this blessed lesson. Lead them from faith to faith, that, every day, and in every thing, they may have a growing dependence on their God and their Saviour. There is something so blessed in this view, that I know not where to stop, or how to end; and should not, but I am called upon to remind Mrs. I. that Mrs. R. sent the things some time ago, and hopes what was for Louisa, and the chain, answered. She paid for them, all but the carriage. Take notice of this in your next, for her satisfaction. They talk of peace; but we are not ripe for it. Great trade would overset us, and prove a natural intoxication. I heard the bishop of Worcester, a Christian bishop, preach at Bow church, and he called it "the insatiable spirit of trade." So I think. A Christian with food and raiment is a happy man. Having many things to say, I must leave some to the next opportunity. I shall forget my right hand when I forget you and yours. Bad news from India. Pray for us, especially for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LXXIII.

Aug. 30, 1785.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—Through a kind Providence, we arrived yesterday at our journey's end, safe at Birmingham. All the way, nothing but death sounded in my ears, calling my faith to remember, "How blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!" A friend separated from us by death is like a limb cut off; one cannot help feeling it; and I have lost so many of late, that I seem to have nothing left but a stump. One of the most successful preachers of this day, my intimate for

thirty-five years, curate of Greaton, Northamptonshire, is just gone to rest—the Rev. Abraham Maddocks: so is my very, very old acquaintance in the Lord, Richard Wilson, of Frome. I have long known Sampson, the dissenting minister at Truro, who is just gone to rest, while his wife was in labour of a sixteenth child; eleven of whom are alive, and left in great distress:—and I must soon follow. Oh it is a wonderful blessing to be ready! It spreads a calm and peace through life, and all its enjoyments, and is a never-failing cordial to cheer our hearts under all their distresses. Strong faith administers strong cordials: this makes me cultivate so much in myself, and recommend so warmly to others, the life of faith. Blessed are they now who live in the Lord: they shall be also blessed when they die in the Lord. Oh that the precious Lord Jesus may give you to know and feel that you have a life in him out of the reach of death! For this I pray absent, but not forgetful of you nor of yours: your best interest lies ever near to my heart; and I verily believe Christ put it there, and keeps it there. May brotherly love continue; and, as the time of exercising it shortens every moment, may its blessed effects increase and abound! We have found the country along the Severn in general sickly—many dead at Upton, particularly Shipman, a good man, and died in the Lord. At Worcester the same. Also at Knightwick, where we staid some days with our tried friends Mr. and Mrs. S. We had the same account at Broomsgrove yesterday. The first symptom is a cold, which brings on a fever, and commonly putrid. Our whole journey has preached death to me; and, thank God, it has made me more lively and more thankful.

I am, and have also great reason to be, in the best bonds, your obliged friend, and faithful servant in the Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXIV.

Jan. 1786.

My dear Friend.—I am often with you at Montpellier. I behold your clear sky and bright sun; and I can feel some of your bracing air and your constant fine weather. I do rejoice in them, because you do; but truly, Sir, I do not wish myself in your place. Although I am happy in your happiness, yet there is something even here at Blackfriars far beyond the south of France; for we are not without our enjoyments. I live in an element; and when my sky is clear, and my sun shines bright, and I feel some of its warm beams, and I breathe its pure æther—these are real blessings; they come down from the Father of lights—gifts like himself. He gives his Spirit to enlighten and to enliven our spirits, that, being one with his Son, we may live upon his fulness in earth and heaven. And when this spiritual life is enjoyed, there is a failing somewhere if its influence does not extend to the body and make the whole man better. My physician prescribes for both: he speaks a peace and a calm to the inward man, which reaches the springs of animal life, and makes them move with delight: the nerves feel it; they are brisk and active: he puts joy into the heart, which does good, like a medicine. No doctor like mine, Mr. I.: you have made use of him for your soul; but I would recommend him to you for the life that perisheth. What if you should leave off physic, and forget your skill in it, and live more by faith for the present life: I could infallibly insure the success. There is a something, not to be described, that he gives, which operates according to promise, and by a divine power; witness Rom. xv. 13, &c. &c. Take a little specimen of our testimony for him in the year 1786. Our motto has been generally Hebrew: the present was, "I am Alpha and Omega:" Alpha is the first, Omega is the last, letter of the Greek alphabet. So Christ is the beginning and ending, and all between from first to last. He is all in all, Rev. i. 8, saith the Lord himself, the God of truth, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the great I AM, from everlasting to everlasting, the Almighty, Jesus the God of nature, the God of grace, the God of providence, the God of glory. He is the first author of all

the divine works in creation and in providence; the first cause of all the divine works in grace and in glory: he is the beginning and the ending. all things are made by him and for him.

Blessed are they who have begun the new year looking to Jesus: they will find in him every thing they can wish to save them from sin and misery, and to make them truly holy and eternally happy; for blessed are all they that put their trust in him. We are come together this morning to devote ourselves afresh to his service, and to begin the year as we hope to end it, in the faith of the Son of God. He is our Alpha and Omega; and yours, I hope, and Mrs. I's. I will give the heads of our subject: the rest your own meditation will supply.

1. He is Alpha, the God of nature, who created all things in heaven and in earth: see Col. i 16, 17, 18, 19; Psalm cii. 25, &c. Every thing that exists (excepting sin) owes its being to Jehovah Jesus; for he is of the same essence, has the same attributes and perfections with the Father. This truth stands upon a rock, and is the foundation of our faith; namely, that Immanuel, the God-man Christ Jesus, is the Alpha and the Omega of our salvation.

2. The God of grace. For as he is the Lord God Almighty, what could be wanting in his life to make his obedience for us an infinite righteousness; or in his death, to render it a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for sin? And the benefit of his life and death can come to you and me in no other way than as an act of the freest grace: and we cannot receive it by any other means than by believing the Father's testimony concerning his Son. Are we wise unto salvation? It is the teaching of our great prophet Jesus; he is the Author and the Finisher too of that faith by which we reap the fruit of his atonement and of his righteousness, and by which also we enjoy all the graces of the Spirit in earth and in heaven; as John i. 16; and, amongst the rest, a life of sweet dependence on him for all temporal things: for he is

3. The God of providence. When he has taught us the safety and happiness of trusting our souls in his hands, he calls for the exercise of this, by leaving our bodies, and all their concerns, with him. He calls for it: "Cast all your care upon me for meat, and drink, and clothing: I will provide. Trust; and be not afraid: I will manage your health and comforts; yea, I will make sickness and troubles real blessings." Oh, Sir, this is paradise; it is the believer's present heaven. He lives by faith at all times, and for all things, bad and good, sick and well, poor as well as rich; in all, he has fellowship with Jesus, who satisfies his heart that he loves him too well to try him with any thing but what is for his good. This is a sovereign antidote against all temporal distresses, and really turns them into spiritual blessings. It is our philosopher's stone. I pray God you may find it, and thereby enrich yourself with all you want, as well as all you have; yea, with the unsearchable riches of Christ: for he is

4. The God of glory; lengthening his grace into eternity. For this he gave himself unto death: it was to purchase for us eternal life, as you may see, John xvii. 20, to the 25th verse. In this prayer I wish you and the family an interest. Pray for yours, in our dear Lord,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LXXV.

July 5, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I could not answer your letter till the lectures were over at St. Dunstan's: then we settled our plan. My sisters have pressed me sore to pay them another visit; to which we have complied; and we purpose, God willing, to set out next Tuesday, July 10; of which I give you as early notice as I could, lest your summer plan should be deranged by not hearing from me. When we shall return, I cannot determine—perhaps time enough to meet you hurrying away out of our blessed country. However, be assured of this, that I shall be much with you, very much, under my favourite elm, sitting and surveying the house and premises, and praying for the blessing of the God of heaven

upon the master, and all his. Indeed, Sir, you have a most bountiful benefactor, who has loaded you with benefits; and he is never weary of giving: the greatest of his gifts he bestoweth liberally; even faith, rich faith, that you may take his Christ, live closer, nearer still unto him, and may be safer by him, and happier in him. This prosperity is much upon my heart: I wish it truly; I ask it fervently. All other things prosper about you: may your soul prosper! As your real friend, studious of your best interest, let me just put down what would have been said—If the hall lectures had been delivered at Brislington, 1787, by W. Romaine, Chaplain in ordinary, morning and evening—How often have you heard me say, "Make sure of Christ:" he is the one thing needful, all besides is nothing worth. Pursue what you will of this world, attain too, ever so much, you only get a great estate; vanity at its best—in the enjoyment, vexation of spirit—and in its duration passing so fast away as not to be worth one farthing when compared with Christ and the eternity of his heaven.

You should be often reading your warrant in scripture, and your encouragements from thence to take him, and make sure of him for your own. The Father's revealed will and command, 1 John iii. 23; the Son's express declaration of his willingness and power to save all that come unto him, John x. 27, 28, 29, 30; and the testimony of the Spirit runs thus: Heb. x. 15—24; a wonderful passage; full of strong arguments to silence all your guilty fears, and to encourage you to live and die in peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Then comes the security of this evidence—Christ *is mine*. I have taken him at God's bidding—I depend on God's warrant—I make use of him, as I am commanded. The Father hath given him to be a teacher. When I read the word, I look up for his Spirit, that he may make me wise unto salvation. When I feel guilt, I quiet my conscience with the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. When temptations meet with corruptions, he gives me courage to oppose, and strength to overcome them. When the miseries of sin are present, the love of God in Christ turns them into blessings. In my walk, in my warfare, in my duties, in my friendships, in every thing, I live by the faith of the Son of God; whereby a man may be as certain that he is alive to God in Christ as that he is alive to this world. Mr. I., there is no freehold like this, both for the certainty of its evidence and also for the blessedness which it brings with it. Make sure of Christ, and all is yours. Faith in him pleads a lawful discharge, under the broad seal of heaven, from all sins and from all miseries. Here is the warrant: see the judge's own hand:—I will remember them no more. And with this there also comes a full conveyance, by deed of gift, of all possible good in time and in eternity. The title is infallible: the earnest is present possession—even the Spirit; and faith, which is the fruit of the Spirit; and the fruits of the Spirit, which are abundant through faith in Christ Jesus. Grace is yours—glory is yours; for the God of grace and glory, God in Trinity, is yours, and will be yours, with all his fulness, for ever. May these be your summer enjoyments; even fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Spirit. Mrs. I. and her beloved children, Mrs. G. and family, Mrs. B. and family; and honest T. Maryport is not forgot. May Christ himself preach, whoever stands up. These are my present sentiments. And I have not said, I shall not proclaim them in my place, in your hall, before the year 88. When we return, we shall hear of your state and circumstances—where you are—how you are—when poor Old England must take its farewell of you. Till then, without fee or reward, I am the foremost of all your friends be they who they may. Pray for

W. Romaine.

Mrs. R. joins in best wishes—Buy "The Christian Remembrancer" at my recommendation; you will thank me when we meet.

LETTER LXXVI.

BLACKFRIARS, *June* 9, 1788.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—You and your family are welcome to England. I rejoice in your safe return, and my joy was increased by your being so sensible of the gracious Providence which kept your going out and your coming in. May you learn more of his tender love to you during this visit to your native country, than you have ever found before. Your letter warmed my heart with the sense which you expressed in it, of this greatest of all blessings, and put me into my proper element of prayer and praise—Prayer that you might now experience a paradise at B. The place, the country, no creature, has this to give: you know that well: but our Jesus has: he can make you quite happy in the love of his Father; and this is paradise restored: he can also make you a blessing to all about you; for his influence is like the sun's. Mrs. I. shall be happier in your happiness. She will have a blessed summer if she feel all I wish her. The young ladies will enjoy the cheerful rays of that sweet sunshine which warms and influences their parents' hearts and lives. May my God thus bless you · and, dear T., join and say, "Oh! we are happy here—truly happy here at B. Jesus shines with the light of his loving countenance, and we have the joy of his salvation:" and I, W. R., add—may he shine on clearer and clearer to the perfect day. I acknowledge your very obliging invitation to spend part of the summer with you. I have delayed writing, in hopes I should be able to give you a direct answer; but I cannot. I have two engagements, one of two years standing, and I cannot fulfil them till about the middle of September: about which time, you will begin to think of taking your flight with the birds of passage. Go where you will, or do what you will, you will be borne on my heart. Let brotherly love continue; yea, increase. Your mother is where she should be: blessed be the name of the Lord! he gave; he took away. Mr. G. and his are not forgotten. I felt much for him at the time. Oh! it is a sore trial. Mrs. R., with most hearty affection, joins me in every good wish to Mrs. I. and yourself, and in my hearty prayers for our young friends. Remember us to Mr. G. and family, and to Mrs. G. Tell T. to try to get out of my debt: he is in my Litany by name, and ought never to pray without mentioning me: nor should you; for it is my privilege to be your constant friend at the throne of grace. May it be yours to plead as constantly for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER LXXVII.

Jan. 31, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—The pleasure which I received from your letter, calls upon me to acknowledge it; which I sit down to do with much thankfulness. I get good from your good; and I am wishing you may return to us as much better as possible. We have had cold weather; but it was very healthful, and to me very pleasant. Our air was very putrid in autumn; but the frost has taken away every thing infectious: our skies are now as salutary as yours in France; and we want nothing in England but to be more sensible of our privileges, and more thankful for them.

You know me well. I am a man of one book, and of one sentiment. The word of God, and faith in his word, make up all my learning, and enter into all my life, private and public. The practice of these principles for the year 89 was taken from Psalm xcvii. 1, "The Lord reigneth"—my Lord Jesus, whose kingdom is of such a nature, that England, and the multitude of its isles, may be glad thereof: because he is almighty—the Creator of all worlds. He did but speak, and his word brought them into being; he did but command, and they are upheld by the word of his power; for all things serve him to this day; and he is the almighty Jesus, the Lord of the spiritual and new creation, in which his word

is always doing wonders. Behold, says he, I create all things new: I give the Spirit of life to the dead sinner, to enable him to believe in me, that he may never perish for his sins, but may have, by my free gift, eternal life; and I will keep him by my mighty power, through faith, till I bring him safe to the fulness of my joys. This is the great king, who has all power in heaven and earth—the God-man Jesus: and the exercise of this power is peculiar to himself. He makes and keeps the new world as he did the old. He governs by his word. The gospel is the sceptre of his sovereign authority. He sent it out from Sion, as Psalm cx. 2; and the rebel nations were made willing to submit to him: and to this day he gathers in his subjects by the same means. When his Spirit puts life and power into the gospel, the sinner hears his call, and comes, and bows the knee before Jesus: he believes, and is pardoned and saved; henceforth he lives by and upon the fulness of the Saviour. This is the way in which he peoples his kingdom; and whenever he brings any one to be his willing subject, he promises them such blessings, under his government, as the world has not to give, and the world, I can witness for him, is not able to take away. Faith gives him credit. And, according to our faith, he fulfils his promises, and makes us really blessed. Here you see, Sir, I get upon my own ground—living by faith—the only happy life—an emperor has nothing to be compared with it—whether you look at the blessedness of our king's subjects, as they relate to spiritual, to temporal, or to eternal things.

His name, his office, his character, of old, was, the Blesser of all nations: so that his subjects are as blessed in him as Abraham was to whom the promise was made. The blesser himself is theirs; his life is their righteousness; his death is their atonement; his resurrection is their justification to life; his ascension is their hope of being with him, and sitting with him on his throne. Oh what do they feel when, from their hearts, they can say, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings! May this be sweet music at Montpellier.

And then, as to temporals, though he be so great a king, yet he is not above looking to the least concerns of his subjects. The very hairs of their head he numbers:

> "If in the least he be so true,
> What won't he in the greatest do?"

He has redeemed the body, as well as the soul; and he says, Cast all the care of that upon me. But I am sick. "Fear not, I am your physician—I can bring health out of sickness. As to food and raiment, family, children, substance—Trust them all in my hands—If you leave them to my management—come what may—I will make it work under me for your good: and if one thing be better than another in this life, you shall have it: for I have said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

He who says these things is King of kings, and Lord of lords: I believe his royal words—and I am as happy about all temporals, as I can be out of heaven. May he make my dear friend as happy; that, looking forward, when we shall see the king in his beauty, we may one day meet, and cast our crowns together down at his feet. So be it. May he reign sole monarch of our hearts till that blessed day.

I hear nothing of Adey nor Jones. I am a stranger in Athens. I only know my king governs all kings, and all kingdoms, and he does all things well. He has the care of your family: they are well, I hear. If you come through London, look upon us, and make us more thankful. All good wishes to my friend Walter; may he come home without hurt to his principles, and better in his health: death has got into their family; and he is seldom content with one. Happy they who are blessed with a life out of his reach—So are believers. Mrs. R. joins in all.

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXVIII.

PLYMOUTH, *Aug.* 20, 1789.

DEAR FRIEND.—I promised to acquaint you with our motions. We inquired after you at Bridport, but could get no intelligence; if we had, we should probably have refreshed ourselves with a short visit. But we must wait a little longer for that pleasure. September will soon approach. Our visit here is over next Monday. On Tuesday we purpose to set out for Tiverton if the king (God bless him!) does not lay an embargo upon us. The whole neighbourhood of Cornwall and Devon crowd in to see the royal family; and I am forced to send to Tiverton for a chaise to take us from this place. We hope to get there on Wednesday next, and to hear from you concerning the state of your famiiy—how you all do—whether settled yet at B. Our kindest respects to your dear partner. Being in the midst of such a hurry—cannonading—crowding—processioning—bell-ringing—ship-fights, &c. &c., I feel my privilege:—"His rest shall be glorious." Quiet at home—the bustle around me makes my rest more sensible and more happy. From my heart I wish you more and more of that calm of soul which is truly paradise restored. Our love to Miss I., and kind remembrance to all our friends, especially brother T—. Lady Hill and Mr. Barham lying dead at the same time. Oh what a lesson of mortality to the survivors! preaching "Be ye also ready—Live by faith, that ye may die in faith." May this be yours. So prays

W ROMAINE.

LETTER LXXIX.

TIVERTON, *Sept.* 1, 1789.

MY DEAR MADAM.—I should have mourned and wept at the contents of your letter, were it not for the consolations of God, which are never small, nor few, to them who trust in him. This sickness is not unto death; but for the glory of God to purify—not to destroy. It comes with a plain lesson, and ought to be a good teacher. Its text is taken out of Prov. iii. 11, 12. And the sermon preached from it, by a most able divine, is recorded Heb. xii. 1 to 14. Our Lord is too good to afflict His willingly. He has gracious purposes in every chastisement. He would have Mr. I. to read what he says, and to trust his faithfulness. Faith, exercised, gets health and establishment. So it works love, and by love. The heart grows satisfied of his love, and loves him more—cleaves to him the faster, and finds that it is good to be with Jesus anywhere, even in a fiery furnace. May my dear friend find it so! I pray it may be a fruitful season; and I thank God that I hope it will. We purpose, through our Almighty guide, to set out on Monday next, and, as we travel with the same horses, to lie at Bridgewater, and to be with you on Tuesday evening. May our meeting be for good, to his praise, and to our profit—that he may cement our hearts more closely to himself—and may give us fresh reasons to love one another as his disciples. Mrs. R. is perfectly well, and desires to be most kindly remembered to you. I shall not cease to pray for you and yours till we meet, being in every holy bond, your friend and servant,

W. ROMAINE

LETTER LXXX.

PORTSWOOD GREEN, *Oct.* 19, 1789.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.—I cannot forget you while I remember any thing. I can give you full credit for your professions of friendship: I wish I could rely with as much confidence on Him, who speaks, and it is done. His word and deed go together—and true faith unites them, and finds them one. The promise, and the blessing in the promise, are the same with Him; only our foolish hearts

separate them: and so, what God hath joined together, we make two; by which means we rob Him of his glory, and ourselves of the blessing. Oh for more faith—settled and established while you are an English believer, and your constant viaticum, go where you may! I have your family at heart, as well as yourself. Mrs. I. wants nothing—God has been very bountiful to her—only more establishment in the faith. There is her safety—there is her happiness. And my Friend cannot only give it, but wishes her to take it—commands her, and would account it the greatest honour she can do him, to cast all her cares and burdens upon his shoulders. Do it in the prayer of faith, and, come what may, the issue will be to you prosperous.

You say nothing of France: perhaps we may see or hear of you the next week, when we hope to get home. Your remembrances of this family were very acceptable to Mr. T., Walter and Samuel, for which they all desire I would thank you. See the fruit of Voltaire's principles—now they are operating. Show me an egg, and I will tell you what it will hatch. May God keep old England from their baleful influence! He only can do it. Even among us they prevail too much. May he stop the spreading of the cause, and the effect also.

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXXI.

May 12, 1790.

Dear Friend.—Your letter from Montpellier, April 7th, did not come to my hands till May 7th. It found me at Reading, very glad and very thankful for the abundance of good news which you sent me. My time is up to-morrow; being obliged to attend my church on Ascension-day, one of my great festivals, when we have preaching and the sacrament, according to the rubric of the church of England. We cannot return again so soon as the 18th instant, and therefore shall not be able to meet you at Reading. But, if we miss the sight of you in London, we will follow you with our prayers; especially that excellent petition of Job, "Thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt find nothing amiss." May England appear to you, as it does to me, the peculiar favourite of heaven: and may you come home to enjoy afresh our special privileges. Mrs. R. and my hearty affection to Mrs. I. Whatever can do good to our young friends, may they share abundantly with your friend and servant in the Lord Christ,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXXII.

Oct. 10, 1791.

My dear Friend.—Mr. T. told me he should send a frank to-morrow, and this paper was to be filled with matter: but this moment coming from the mill, he says, he must send it to-night. I have, therefore, only time (now it is past six) to thank you for many long-continued favours—the cause of them I hope to retain as long as I have my being. As I am convinced of the necessity of your journey, I can the more earnestly pray that God would make it answer your most sanguine wishes; and if we are to meet together in this world, it may be with renewed health, and renewed hearts: I am myself, at present, very poorly, with my usual autumn complaint, but by no means left to myself to murmur or complain. It is good. It is for the best. I acknowledge it. I feel it. I thank my God for his supports and comforts. It is not improbable but we may meet, about the latter end of the month, at Reading; and it will be a cordial to see you set out tolerably well. Our real love to Mrs. I.—I hope it will be made a pleasing service to her to attend you in these long journeys. We are very much obliged to Miss I. for her late obliging attentions to us. You will please to remember us to all our friends, as the Shrapnells also do from Bradford, and wish some

providence might throw you in their way. Oh that blessed old disciple, Richard Pearce! he thanks you for your thinking of him: he is just ripe for glory. I saw Mr. Spencer, that good man, who also wishes to be remembered to you. The young man you sent to him is likely to do well.

Mr. Serle's "Christian Remembrancer" is a most proper book for a journey—it is so well divided: chapters so short, and yet very experimental, that I could wish it to be your companion. I do not find that I can read it often enough. May you have the same key to open it, and the same spirit to apply it.

I need say nothing about this family, as Mr. T. writes himself. Mr. T. has two daughters now at the Hot Wells—to-day a poor account of them both. May you keep yours to your joy. Our love to Miss Louisa, and what love dictates—real wishes, further improvement in useful knowledge, and saving grace. So prays yours in our common Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Feb. 8, 1792.

My good Friend.—We have consecrated a day of thanksgiving to the keeper of Israel, who kept your going out safe; and thank you for informing us of it. We hope, before the sun gets out of Aries, he will favour us with another holy day, for bringing you back in peace. Till that happy time arrive, I reckon it my privilege to be daily with you in spirit, and to be keeping up the communion of saints, which is as real a blessing upon earth as it will be in heaven; for believers are all united to one head, have one spirit breathing through them, and enabling them by one faith to cleave close to their head, and, as far as they do, he disposes, and enables them to cleave close in brotherly love to one another. I have you as much upon my heart, while you are at Montpellier, as when I sleep under your roof at Brislington. Prayer for every possible good to you and yours, and praise for the blessings you have received, are truly my present employment; I find it also delightful to remember you before my Lord. May he make it as pleasant to you to read, as it is to me to inform you, of our religious engagements here in the present year. Our word was—Grow in grace. Growth is the end and design of receiving it; and the only purpose of living another year is, that we may get grace in it, and use it. If we have it not, that we may seek until we find it: and, if we have it, that we may improve it; for it is as necessary as breath to the body. The scripture compares it to a cool breeze after a hot sultry day, and also to the dew upon herbs—grace is as refreshing as dew, and as strengthening and bracing as the cool air is in hot weather. When it is saving, it is the favour of the blessed Trinity to sinners who are quickened by the Spirit of grace, and brought by him to believe in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby to the enjoyment of the Father's grace and love. In the Trinity it is always the same, and also in the scriptures; but as to our sense and experience, there is a growth, by more dependence on God's faithfulness to his promises, and more dependence on the supplies of the Spirit, in applying and making the promises good. Thus he who grows in grace this year (as it follows in the text) will grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: the more he knows of him, the more he will trust him; and he who trusts him most will certainly love him best; and he who loves him best will be using all the means of grace, that he may grow in the sense of his favour; the love of Christ will constrain him powerfully to do what Christ loves, to bear patiently Christ's cross, and to persevere in fighting Christ's battles; always remembering that if we have ever so much, Christ giveth more grace.

This was the sum. Reflecting on the past year, the believer should be greatly humbled at his little growth. On the present, setting out in Christ's strength to get forward—more dead to nature, and more alive to grace. Our activity, usefulness, holiness, happiness, depend on our growing into Christ, and daily making such a progress that we may get more grace to return him more glory. This is my daily prayer for all the family, Mrs. I. and Miss, and your English

friends, in which my dear partner most heartily joins. I heard of you at Paris —a friend saw you at Mr. Maronne's church, and was pleased to see yon so much affected by his discourse: truly, so was I: my heart rejoices that the gospel is known, felt, and in its real blessings enjoyed in your heart. I had an offer to go and preach at Mr. Maronne's, and my expenses paid; but it is too late in life: yet I am trying to get some lively gospel minister to go to Paris. The winter has been at times severe, but never long. My crocuses were in blossom, and fine, last Friday, Feb. 3, and at present our spring delightful; I wish you were with us, that you might experience some of our good days. I have no correspondence in Bristol to inform me of any thing going on there. As you return, let us look at you, and be thankful that once more you vouchsafe to visit your own country and friends. Pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXXIV.

Southampton, *Oct.* 25, 1792.

My dear Friend.—We have waited with patience for your visit from day to day, but no Mr. I.: Mr. Samuel T. expected you, and was very much disappointed; as he told me, last night, that he wanted to consult you. We set out for Reading to-morrow, in our way home; and shall be glad to hear how Providence may direct you to dispose of yourself this winter Go, or stay, I shall be with you; but I should like to know your determinations, that I may ask of my bountiful Lord what will be suitable to your case. He is always at hand, and never at a loss for grace sufficient; and he displays his marvellous skill the most when all the foundations of the earth are out of course. It is at this time a strangely disordered world; but his plan is carrying on, and his kingdom shall stand for ever and ever. May he keep you his subject where (come what may) all is safe, and all is happy.

We have had prayer-meetings for fair weather, which the Lord has heard. May he direct you aright every step you take, to the city of habitation. Ever yours in him,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXXV.

Dec. 12, 1792.

My dear Madam.—I feel for your present situation, and I know how much you want the consolations of God. May these abound when others fail. This is the superior excellency of our most holy faith, that it affords not only supports, but also comforts in the worst of times. I am a living witness of this, and I hope and pray you may join me in attesting that God is very good in all his dealings with his children. When Mr. I. was in town, he was kind to give us a great deal of his company; and he promised to write us word of his safe arrival in France, and how his ward fared. Our anxiety is great in not hearing from him. It will be a great favour to me and Mrs. Romaine, if you will oblige us with an account of his safety. With much thankfulness do I bless my God for his mercy to Miss I., who will be a real comfort to you during this lonesome winter. I am not without hopes of Miss L.: she is in my book. From my country all is good news: this world—poor France has none—without Christ—My heart bleeds for the dismal tragedies of the day. Accept our best wishes, and believe me to be, in bonds never to be broken, your real friend—in our common Lord.

W. Romaine

LETTER LXXXVI.

Jan. 23, 1793.

My dear Madam.—I am much beholden to you for your speedy answer to my inquiries, and for good news, and for much concerning our friend abroad, and friends at home, very dear to you by natural bonds, but much more by that nearest of all relations, the bond of the Spirit. I acknowledge with thankfulness the many favours of God to you, and am at prayers for the continuance of them —that he who has begun a good work may carry it on to perfection in your sister, brother, and all your children. Where there are fair buds and blossoms, may they not be blighted, but bear rich and ripe fruit, that will endure unto everlasting life.

In return for your good news, I am happy that I can send you some of mine—indeed some of the best which ever came from heaven. It relates to a person called Melchisedek, which was our word for this year, of whom great things are spoken, Gen. xiv. and Psal. cx.; such as can belong to none but the Lord God; and, now they are talking of putting down all kings, I thought it high time to look after a kingdom that cannot be moved: and such I have found in this name, as the apostle has explained it at large, and given us a whole chapter upon it, Hebrews vii. He says it means the king of righteousness—king Jesus, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and has all power in heaven and earth, to make his subjects righteous. He is the Lord their righteousness—Almighty to pardon their sins, almighty to subdue their sins, and all their enemies, and almighty to give them faith to trust him for salvation, and for all the things which accompany salvation. Happy subjects, who, being justified by faith, have peace with God, and who live under his government safe and happy. They do not live up to their privileges if either guilty fears or natural fears distress them. When kingdoms are convulsed, states are overthrown, and the civil world turned upside down, the feet having got into the place of the head—then he says to the weakest of his subjects, "Fear not, lest any hurt you: I will keep you night and day: under my protection you are as safe as if you were in heaven."

There was a great deal said of this most blessed Melchisedek, which I need not repeat; you have heard his praises celebrated so often by me, and long before in the word of God, Psalm xlvi., and in that famous hymn, Isaiah xii. We only want more faith to make him more precious, and ourselves more happy. Let this be our study; and on him may our hearts be fixed through the present year. The government is upon his shoulders—the greatest concerns, and the least. May our King (for his eyes and care are every where) look on our travelling friend, and keep him till we meet in peace. May you and yours find it a faithful saying, recorded of his subjects, Psalm cxii. 7, 8, and then you will prize and love Melchisedek.

Mrs. R. has a very bad cold, but it is mending; so is mine. I find inward health a great promoter of bodily health; and I would recommend my Doctor as the only giver of eternal health. Our real love in him to Miss I. and our best wishes to Louisa. When you see our friends at Stoney Hill, or at Clifton, be so good as to recommend us to them in christian affection; and to Mr. T. and Mr. B. Again I thank you for your very obliging letter, and am in our dearest Lord, and in his bonds, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXXVII

April 24, 1793.

My dear Madam.—I have to thank you for your kind remembrance of us, and for acquainting us with your present uneasiness: it is ours, as well as yours.

We often converse about it, and do truly feel for you. My only reason for not writing before was from a fear that our sentiments would not give you the relief we wished. I thought it would only increase your suspicions of Mr. I.'s safety. He has been very much lately upon my heart, and I have been led, without knowing his situation till you informed me, to pray for him. My Lord, I trust, has him in his keeping, and his tender mercies are over him for good: he can preserve him safe in the den of lions, and give you to see his face with joy. If he hear my prayers, and I once more behold him on English ground, it will make my heart truly thankful and happy. God hasten the time!

You see, my good friend, the truth of my doctrine, which I am always inculcating, because I experience the blessedness of it; that is, I am trying to persuade every body to live by faith, trusting their dearest comforts in the hand, and leaving them to the management of the Lord Christ, even life itself. A true Christian holds all by grace, which is the best and the safest tenure in the world. What we have from the sovereign bounty of the giver, we honour him by suffering him to keep it for us, and us for it; and then all will be well, come what may. You have heard of a man who lost nine children at a stroke, and yet he was enabled to kiss this sharp rod, and to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." In this patience may he enable you also to possess your soul till he be pleased to turn our present prayers into thanksgiving. And when that happy day arrives (Oh may it be soon, very soon!) you will make Mrs. R. and me very happy in giving us occasion to join our praises with yours. Till that time I shall be in my watch-tower, waiting on my Lord, and expecting his gracious answer; of which I am very seldom disappointed. Yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

June 7, 1793.

My dear Madam.—We had begun our thanksgiving on Tuesday morning. Mr. I. called at my son's, at Reading, and though only the servant was up, yet, from all circumstances, they concluded it was our friend. My son knew how anxious we were about his safety and his arrival, and therefore sent us word directly by the coach. Oh it was a joyful message indeed: it brought forth warm praises to Him who is good, and doeth good to the children of men—who kept our friend's going out and coming in. Perhaps nobody felt more gratitude than myself, excepting Mrs. I. and her daughters: with you I may not compare. But, after many prayers and much waiting, such a gracious answer made us keep a day of thanksgiving with uncommon joy. May my Lord consecrate your heart to give him all the glory; and may his return prove a real blessing to his children and friends. I am interested in his recovery; and he who can restore him and soon shall hear often from me, until prayer for health be turned into the voice of rejoicing, and he himself shall say, "I am now well, both in body and soul, thanks be to Him whose mercy endureth for ever."

While we, his friends, are thus striving who of us shall be most thankful for this special providence, I would hope and pray that Mr. I. himself, for whom we are praising, may feel more than any of us. It is God's goodness to him for which we are so much affected. Oh what mercies have followed him all the days of his life! and none greater than those of the present year and journey. May a record of them be written deep upon his heart; and when these are added to the vast sum of mercies already received, and to the greatest of all still in hope, may he be enabled in all things to be giving of thanks. While he is kept in this happy frame, he will feel as if he was got into paradise, and had really entered into the joy of his Lord.

Be assured, my partner, standing by me, is impressed with the same sentiments as myself. We have often joined in prayer for what now occasions our mutual thanksgivings. May this be the happiest meeting in your lives. Oh that the

voice of joy and health may sound loudly in the dwellings of the righteous, and every breath be praise. So prays an old friend, and a true friend,

W. ROMAINE,
For all his friends at Brislington.

LETTER LXXXIX.

June 11, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—You refreshed my spirit, and I am thankful. What has been done to you has been God's way of old—"many are the troubles of the righteous; but out of them all the Lord delivereth him:" so he will go on with you. And yet a little while he will come and give you an everlasting deliverance. I am better pleased that you did not stop in London: the magnet ought to point to your own family. There was the chief attraction. Their pleasure at the sight of you was ours also: and I hope and pray that our mutual pleasure may continue and increase by your gaining strength and spirits every day.

This is a preaching day; but I would not neglect giving you an account of our engagements. I never can get out of town till about the end of July, and stopping, as I must, at Reading, and at Mr. S.'s, I could not by any means reach B. till about the end of August: you will settle whether that can be made convenient for your return from Beminster: it is the earliest we can think of quite leaving London. You will please, to Mrs. I., to present my grateful acknowledgments for her last latter. Oh how good is our God to your children! May his abundant grace and blessing rest upon them. I see no end of these wars and distresses of nations. The cause remains—rather increases: so must the effects. "If you walk contrary to me, I will walk contrary to you:" this he has proved to be his way in all ages; and I pray, but with trembling, for our own land, lest national iniquity should be nationally punished. Pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XC.

READING, *Aug.* 3, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I was just going to write, when your letter came this morning, Aug. 3d. We had agreed to set out for B. Tuesday the 27th, and hope to be with you the next day. I wish to live under an abiding sense of the certainty of death, and of preparation for it. Thank God, I feel the truth of your reflections, and I know in whom I have believed. Just on the verge of eternity, oh it is a blessed prospect to be able to look forward with a hope full of glory and immortality! It makes age, with its numerous infirmities, not only tolerable, but truly blessed. To live in the Lord is heaven upon earth—to die in the Lord is the heaven of heavens. I am a witness for Jesus. How happy it is to live by faith in him! And Jesus himself is a witness how happy it is to die in faith: so he assures us—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." He who spake it with a voice from heaven has never broken his word to one dying believer; and he will not to you: trust, and be not afraid. Cordially yours,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XCI.

BRADFORD, *Oct.* 8, 1793.

MY VERY DEAR MR. I.—I saw Mr. E. M. on Sunday, who told me you was still at B. Peace be with you there, and every where, you and yours; he can make your home a paradise, and Beminster the door of heaven If it be his holy

will, for which I pray, he can make a winter in England as healthful as the south of France, or the best of Spain. we are fully persuaded of it, who live by faith; for he says to us, "Cast all your care upon me: for I care for you—Come what may, I will make it work for the best." Do, Sir, try him. Take him at his word, and let him manage for you this winter: depend upon it, he will look to all your matters, and will take it kindly of you that you trust them in his hands: he is faithful—I am a witness for him—He has done for me better than I could either ask or think; and he vouchsafed to give me the honour of pleading with him, that he would do as much for you. Oh that he may make an English winter as profitable as a French; and may give you as much, yea, more occasion to thank him for home mercies than for foreign. And may God's favourite land be your favourite. We have Mrs. I. and all your concerns upon our hearts, being, with true Christian love, in our dearest Lord, your friends and servants,

W. Romaine

LETTER XCII

Jan. 4, 1794.

My dear Friend.—When I saw your red wafer, before I opened your letter, my heart leaped for joy; but, when I read the contents, I blessed his holy name, and gave him all the glory. It is his own doing; and, indeed, it ought to be marvellous in our eyes. The more he makes it so, we will join prayer to praise, and beg of him, that whatever was his gracious purpose, in his late visitation, it may be completely answered, and Mrs. I.'s body and soul may be better for it. Oh what a Jesus do we serve! with what confidence may we trust him, who bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up! And he gives us full warrant. Trust in him at all times, ye people: pour out your hearts before him in the prayer of faith. God will be a sure refuge for you in the distresses of life, and in the hour of death. In this delightful exercise, methinks, I hear our friend: What return shall I make unto the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?—I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. Oh that I may answer his gracious purpose in raising me up again, that I may grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory, both now and for ever. Mr. I. stands by, and says, Amen; for I know his feelings: he is blessing his God, who has favoured him with such a gift, and has now, as it were, redoubled it, by continuing it: he is praying to be made, and to be kept thankful, that every sight of Mrs. I. may stir up gratitude and praise in his heart to a bountiful Jesus. Oh! if ever I take my seat in the hall, to worship again, may our meeting be something of heaven, and our praises like theirs above. What mercies! how great—how many! I believe Miss I. knows how to value, perhaps much better than I can, such a parent restored to her: she is sensible of the signal favour; and I pray with the same warm heart Miss L. may thank her God—I would hear her do it. Oh what a blessing to me that my dear mother, who loves me as her own soul, and is the safe guide of my youth, should be raised from such a bed of sickness, and spared to me, and to my sister? I wish to praise the Lord for this his goodness, and to show him my thankfulness in word and in deed. So be it.

You have friends to join you: I know some who are giving glory where it is due, and begging of God that the family and relations, and all your connexions, may be profited by this visitation. May increasing health inspire increasing gratitude. I hope my Lord will take especial care of your own health, and be the guardian and defender of our country. I am at prayers—My chief concern in the times is with God: let him do what he will, believers will be safe, as in the ark, as in going through the Red Sea, Yea, they may sing the 46th Psalm, as I do this day. Your friend in the Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XCIII.

Feb. 1, 1794.

My dear Madam.—I have many reasons to rejoice with you, and join my praises to him who hath done such great things for you, and will do greater still. He has restored your life from destruction—health is returning—and spiritual health is returned. Oh how did my heart rejoice! Far more than for any thing outward, when I read of God's abundant grace to you in giving you a thankful spirit! For this is spiritual liveliness, and spiritual growth. I could not help taking up these holy words—"I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. Oh magnify the Lord with me; and let us exalt his name together. We sought the Lord, and he heard us, and delivered us from all our fears. Blessed, blessed, most blessed, be his holy name." Do I not hear you say, Amen?

I have observed the public mind too much agitated about the signs of the times: and my own friends rather uneasy about what was coming upon the earth. Come what may, I have always an infallible antidote: and I gave for the word of this year, "The God of hope," Rom. xv. 13. This is one of his high styles and titles. The God from whom believers in Christ may hope for all possible good, and to be saved from all possible evil. Such are his promises—and faith looks at the truth of them, and hope waits for the fulfilling them, not doubting but that God is faithful. This is his character—"a promise-keeping God." And may he render this year famous for the exercise of Christian hope—well grounded—sure and certain—built upon immutable things—and bringing the words before us into happy experience; even that the God of hope may fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost.

This hope is his gift—a grace of his power—the fruit of believing. Whatever God has promised, be it ever so great, ever so much, he enables the believer to hope for its accomplishment, and to wait God's time. If it be for sin—being justified by faith, he gives peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord—peace in the sense of pardon, and peace in the sense of favour, that he has brought us into a state of favour, and that we stand in it with the fullest security of the word, promise, covenant, and oath of the Holy Trinity, that we shall be kept unto the end. This is the hope which never maketh ashamed. All worldly hopes may disappoint, but this cannot. Rom. v. 5. The believer looks at sin, and triumphs, Rom. viii. 31, 32, 33, 34, looks at the troubles arising from sin; for they all come from it, and he carries on his triumph, Rom. viii. 35, to the end. He looks at death, and still is happy; for he has hope in his death. Prov. xiv. 32. He looks, beyond death, to a God of hope. He looks for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, with a hope full of glory and immortality. Psalm xlviii. 14; Titus i. 1, 2, 3; Jude 20, 21, 24, 25. This is the sum and substance, of which you can make the application. The word and Spirit of God encourage us to trust and not be afraid: for he is faithful who promised. Is this my hope? Have I begun the year with waiting thus upon God? It is very high worship, and the most honourable that can be to God's promises. Oh for many, many such worshippers! they need not fear the raging storm, threatening destruction to the earth. They have embarked all their hopes with their Almighty Jesus; and he has engaged to bring them safe to the haven where they would be, as you read, Heb. vi. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. The prayer that ended the sermon comes down to Brislington; and Mrs R.'s love, with mine, to you all.

W. Romaine.

LETTER XCIV.

April 19, 1794.

My dear Friend.—I was made to believe that I should have seen you, face to face, long before this, and your last letter gave me some hopes of it; but I wait no longer. You cannot think how much I was flattered by your account of yourself; because it was a demonstration of the truth of my principles, which you have so often heard from my mouth, and have so often under my hand. You see, he can keep you any where, every where, when duty calls you. He can make England a very paradise: so it is to me—all but heaven. How well has our God carried you through the winter—found you work—fitted you for it—given you health and strength; and, what is better still, spiritual health and strength, to thank him, and bless his dear name. Oh may every heart in your family, and every tongue in it, ascribe to him with gratitude Mrs. I.'s recovery, and your own particular mercies, and the dutifulness of your children! May HE have all the glory! It is from him that the voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous; and to him I look with thanksgiving for making you a witness for my old doctrine. Oh! it is a blessed thing to trust him. He promises, and he will make his word good. Trust in him at all times, ye people, and in all places. They shall want no manner of thing that is good. But, now I have got upon this subject, I must stop; for there is no end of it · the triumph of faith is the everlasting joy of heaven. I hear Mr. T. has undertaken great things this Easter. I wish his strength may be equal to his courage. Both mine continue, very marvellously in mine own eyes. I labour more than ever; sometimes to the weariness of the flesh; but my friend gives me rich cordials, and I go on, aiming, as he helps me, to magnify and exalt God-Jesus. He has poured out a very remarkable spirit of prayer; and multitudes, multitudes, through the land, are on their bended knees, lifting up holy hands, crying for mercy. I hope he will hear, and answer by granting us a national reformation, that iniquity and infidelity may not be our ruin. Mr. William Jones has just printed a sermon on the Man of Sin. It is very interesting. I wish you to read it.

The times are still tempestuous, and the poor church tossed on the waves, like Noah's ark: but not one embarked with Christ shall ever perish. They may suffer shipwreck; but, as it was, Acts xxvii., they all got safe to land. I am in the ark, and hope it will soon be so with me. To this most blessed Pilot I commit you and yours. Do not forget in your best moments your friend and servant in the Lord,

W. Romaine

LETTER XCV.

Reading, *June* 20, 1794.

My good Friend.—If I did not hear oftener of you than from you, I should be not a little grieved. As it is, I have been much led out in my meditations on the present state of your family, and the trials of your faith. If they should be greater than they are, there is a rich supply provided, ready for use, for your suitable improvement. He who sitteth upon the throne has grace sufficient to help in every time of need; and he courts you to take it. You do him a favour by coming to his fulness for a quiet and patient spirit. He loves to be liberal, and would have you to trust him, as far as his promises go. Your daughter is in his hands, and he will be kind and tender over her. Your prayers for her will soon be turned into praises: mine are begun; so are my dear partner's, who feels much for Mrs. I. on this occasion. Many blessings will be given to you if any of your family will give us one line, directed to me at Dr. R.'s, Reading. Your kind invitation has been respected; and we hope, in the course of the summer, to visit our Brislington friends. Your convenience will be studied, that our coming may neither interfere with business nor pleasure. It cannot be, on our part, till some time in August; but of that more hereafter. You say nothing of

Mr. Jones's Sermon on the Man of Sin, which I recommended. It is all I have to say on the present distress of nations. My sanctuary grows every day more safe and precious, because I find all that is said of it to be true in Isaiah xxvi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. Pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XCVI.

Aug. 9, 1794.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.—We were in Buckinghamshire for a fortnight, and did not receive your letter of the 25th July till August 6th: nothing else could have hindered me from not answering it sooner, especially as your motions depend so much upon it. We set out for the West (Tiverton) on Wednesday next, 13th instant, and hope to get there by Saturday. Staying and resting a little, we intend to visit the sea-coast, perhaps at Teignmouth. And after our return to Tiverton, which cannot be till about the first week in September, we will give you as early notice as we can of our meeting, on a day fixed, at Brislington. I look forward with prayer, that it may be made a happy meeting to us all. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so," &c. We want much encouragement from the warnings given us of our uncertain stay here: age preaches, "Be ready:" infirmities second the lesson: the state of the world cries aloud—wars, tumults, cruelties never heard of before. The state of the church also is alarming, more than any thing else—Philosophy with its vain deceits—Infidelity, with its natural children—a swarm of most profane practices, destroying all subordination to God's ministers and to God's magistrates, whom he has set over us, that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. These evils are growing worse and worse, especially as none can tell when they will stop, or how. How earnestly should we endeavour to strengthen one another's hearts and hands in the good ways of God when we see all these things come upon the earth! I keep in my watch-tower, looking to him for his gift of repentance and reformation to a guilty land, that iniquity may not be our ruin; and thanking him for his special favour, that there is a sanctuary out of the reach of all dangers, and that we, of his mere grace, are in it; described Isaiah xxvi. 1, 2, 3, 4. Do not cease to pray for your old friend, and the Lord's old disciple,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XCVII.

TIVERTON, *Aug.* 27, 1794.

MY GOOD FRIEND, OLD FRIEND.—The time is approaching when I hope to meet you at B.; and I wish it for the strengthening of one another's hearts in the ways of God: and I wish it the more, because my time is short. I published a book upon Ecclesiastes 12th, some years ago, written by a Dr. Smith, physician to King Charles II. I then thought I understood every symptom of old age: but now I find a better comment, since I feel them in my own person. And though my tabernacle be taken down, yet it is done with so much tender compassion, and so gently, that I am enabled to put old age among my blessings, and thank my God that I have so few infirmities. We purpose, God willing, to leave this place Sept. 9th, Tuesday, and to be with you Wednesday or Thursday in that week: may Mrs. I. and your daughters receive from our meeting all the good we wish: and Mrs. Romaine says, she hopes it will not be little. I am, in my dearest Lord, your faithful servant,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER XCVIII.

Oct. 9, 1794.

My dear Friend.—Yesterday we got safe to Portswood, through the kind hand of our God. Mrs. R. in good health, and desiring with me to be remembered in love to Mrs. I. and to your daughters. In the midst of this great storm, which rages through Europe with unabating fury, what a blessing to enjoy a calm within! a quiet conscience—a happy heart—a true paradise! Let the hurricane spread, and threaten to carry all before it; yet you can recollect what is said of a righteous man: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord: his heart is established: he shall not be afraid." This is the haven of peace, into which he has entered, and is safe, whose anchor is Christ: all with him is sure and steadfast. Come what may upon the earth, even the great day of the Lord, instead of fearing any thing that can hurt him, he may, he will, lift up his head with joy, and triumph in the God of his salvation. May this be your portion when most wanted.

Our stay here will be short. We paid you the longest visit we have made this summer. It is continually sounding in mine ears: "They sorrowed most of all because they should see his face no more," &c.* It is certain, at my time of life, we cannot promise ourselves on any good ground a yearly visit to our friends. Our meetings must be before God—in the prayer of faith for them—which is the communion of saints—and praise to him for brotherly love with its heavenly fruits. I hope to visit you with my last and dying testimony of faith. I go to town sooner than usual, that I may put my "Triumph of Faith" to the press: and then, my good God favouring me, you will read, and I trust will be a witness, that "Blessed are they who live—and most blessed are they who die in Jesus." To him I commend you and Mrs. I., Miss I. and dear Louisa, with the blessings of Jesus on you all. I am, with hearty love, your friend and servant in our dearest Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER XCIX.

Nov. 14, 1794.

Yes; poor L. is dead; and he gives us warning. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose. His sun is gone down. Yours and mine are setting. What a comfort! our day's work is done; we are walking as children in the light, and waiting to be sent for, whenever our Lord pleases. It need not be a violent death. It must be soon—in the course of nature. It may be in a moment. Come ever so soon, it will be a blessed time. When—and where—and how—all is settled by him who says to you and to me, "Fear not; I will be with you," &c. As to what you mention of his funeral, I have taken care of that: but I understand from Mr. N., the curate, that there are some little expenses attending his illness, apothecary's bill, &c. which Mr. C. has agreed to help me to discharge: and if any thing should remain after his debts at W. are discharged, out of respect to Mr. L. we would make Mrs. L. a present of it, although I have informed her already that our subscription is now closed, and that she cannot any longer look to us for her support.

I have nothing to do with the times but in the way of prayer. Grant us peace in our time, O Lord. So I ask, and keep on asking, although it seems to be farther and farther out of sight. Thus the prophet prayed: "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard; rest, and be still." To whom it was answered, "How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge to take vengeance, and there is no repent-

* Mr. Romaine visited no more the friends and country here alluded to being called to his rest in the ensuing summer.

ance nor turning from their crying sins." The Lord grant iniquity may not be our ruin! I have time to pray for Louisa. I hope he will hear and answer, who is my friend and yours. Mrs. I. and Miss have much occasion for faith and patience: I pray for them, that they may find grace to help them in every time of need. Very soon, yet a very little while, and faith and patience will be no more wanted: till that time, may they do their perfect work. I am very busy printing my dying testimony for the truth of the gospel of Jesus, and for the power of it. If you live to see it, you will know somewhat more of his unspeakable grace and favour to

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER C.

Dec. 19, 1794.

MY DEAR MADAM.—None of your friends can sympathise with you more on this melancholy occasion than we do. I have written to your brother by this day's post, directing him where to look for supports and comforts. When I was in the same situation, by the loss of a son in the East Indies, I found the consolations of God not a few, nor small. I hope and pray that he may find the same, and in patience possess his soul. A parent (and Mr. G. had much of a parent's feeling) cannot but grieve at the loss of an only son: yet there is grace promised sufficient to help to bear quietly, yea, to profit from this affliction, as you read in Job's case, and in Hebrews xii. The same God, and who keepeth promise for ever, can do, and does as great things, for them who trust in him, as he ever did. And the prayer of faith availeth much to sanctify all our afflictions. Mine are very great at present: Mrs. Romaine has been very ill for three weeks, and is still confined: we hope she is mending; but it is very slow. I must therefore beg your prayers for me and her. Mine for yourself and family do not fail: and for a profit by this loss, I am pleading with the God of all consolation. May he sanctify it to all his relations: and make up an abundant blessing for your spiritual improvement by this his afflicting providence. I am, with great truth, your obliged friend and servant in the Lord,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CI.

Jan. 29, 1795.

HON. MADAM.—I received your letter yesterday, and though I am very busy, yet I answer it immediately, thanking God that we have learned to rejoice with them that do rejoice. Mrs. R. is singularly obliged to you, because she was very much interested about these young men, and blessed God, who gave them such a great deliverance. I heartily wish they themselves may be made very sensible of it. Mrs. R. is very well in health, and has no complaint but a weakness in her ankles, which makes it painful to walk: and as to myself, I have suffered greatly from a cough, and do suffer still; but, altogether, I am a miracle of God's goodness. As to what he is doing in the earth, I take no part, but in prayer. Matters are never so bad but he can set them right; and I know that the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. From this knowledge I have been encouraged to reprint a little tract; many thousands of which were printed in the two last wars, and owned of God, and blessed. As soon as printed, I will send some of them to Mr. Hazard's, where they may be had for one penny a piece.

Your not hearing from us so long, was owing to Mr. I., who is in my debt in the way of correspondence.

You will receive soon my "Triumph of Faith." I have an opportunity of sending it by a friend, who will deliver it to you: in which you will see my present views. I hope they will answer your experience, and establish your heart in believing, come what may upon this wicked world.

I thank you for your account of your family. I rejoice in your joy; and I pray for Miss Louisa, that her health may be perfectly restored, and she and her dear sister may be great domestic blessings to their parents.

I desire to be remembered to Mrs. B. and to my good brother T., when you see or hear of them: and I would thank Mr. G. for his kind letter, which I cannot get leisure to answer,

You will favour me with your interest at my master's throne, who can make these, my last days, my best days. May he do the same for you and for Mr. I With great truth, I am, your faithful friend, and humble servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CII.

To Mrs. B.

Brighthelmstone, *Oct.* 14, 1764.

Grace be with you, my dear friend, and with yours.—Upon hearing of the late mercy which you have received, I found my heart rejoice in the Lord, and my faith in him strengthened. Surely his compassions fail not. He is all faithfulness and truth. The mercy which he has promised, he will fulfil to a thousand generations, and none who trusted in his promised mercy ever were or ever will be confounded. I had no doubt of this in myself, through his good hand upon me; but by his dealings with you and yours I am more confirmed, and learn to trust him more. May his great kindness to you have the same effect. May it bring you to see more clearly that you are in Christ, and, as you learn to trust and to depend more upon him, you will thereby get more out of his fulness. And this seems to me to be the end and purpose for which a believer lives. He is in Christ, and he is suffered to live a longer time, that every new day may bring him to a more settled dependence upon Christ. His faith is to be always growing and getting some fresh establishment in Christ. So we read of the Thessalonians, in the first epistle. Their faith was so famous, that it was spoken of throughout the world; and yet, afterwards, in the second epistle, it is said, Their faith had grown exceedingly. It was not only kept alive, or at a stand, but also increased, being renewed day by day by the word and Spirit of God; under whose teaching the believer attains more large views of the covenant of grace, of the unchangeable faithfulness of the Eternal Three in their covenant offices, and of his safety in relying upon their making good to him every covenant mercy. Thus, seeing all things well ordered and sure in the covenant for his ac eptance, through the finished work of Jesus, and for his holy and happy walk through the almighty grace of Jesus—whatever could bring him to God, and keep him near to God, all provided, and all made over to him by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie. On this foundation resting his soul, his conscience is at peace, and he grows daily more sensible of his being in the favour and love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in their covenant offices, and gets more comfortable evidence of their acting in each for his good. And as his faith thus grows, whatever opposes him in his walk becomes more easy to overcome; because he sees all fulness of grace and power treasured up in his dearest Saviour, and he knows it is there for his use, and he there goes for every thing he wants; and, by daily sweet experience, finding the faithfulness of Jesus, he grows bolder, and has more freedom to go to him. He learns not to be discouraged by what he feels in himself, be it what it will; but he carries it to the Lord. And when he makes use of Christ's promised strength, and relies wholly on it, to subdue corruptions, to conquer enemies, to overcome difficulties, to deny self, and to bear the cross, then all things go well. So long as he trusts in the Lord, the Lord makes him to prosper. The devil cannot come at such a person, but by attacking his faith, and he cannot conquer him till faith give way; and his faith will not shrink, because God keeps it, and with him he trusts faith and all, looking up to the Lord to keep him by the power of his might.

Oh! happy man this; to whom the Lord saith, "I will preserve thee from all evil;" and he saith, "Lord, I believe thy word; and on thy power alone do I depend to preserve me:" to whom the Lord saith again, "I will bless thee, and thou shalt lack no manner of thing that is good."

True, Lord; so I find it. What good thing lack I yet, now thou art mine and I am thine? Thou hast taken all my evil upon thyself, and thou hast given me all thy good. In having thee, I have all things: only I want more faith. Oh that I may glorify thee more! by putting more trust and confidence in thee! Still, Lord, increase; still, day by day, let it be growing—a growing faith increasing exceedingly, until I receive the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul.

I kept writing on, thinking these things, which are the joy of my heart, may, in these retired hours, rejoice yours also. May the Lord convey them to you with that life and power which I feel now I am writing. I am a poor creature—the poorest of all. Yet Jesus is mine. In his love, and by his sweet constraining grace, I am yours,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CIII.

BRIGHTON, *Sept.* 30, 1795.

DEAR Mrs. B.'s servant salutes her in his wife's name, being appointed to answer her letter.—You want to receive something from us, which breathes the air of Canaan. Is not Jesus Canaan itself? Is he not the breath, the light of life; the bread, the water of life; the garments of salvation; the everlasting feast of joy and gladness of that blessed country? While we talk of him by the way, as we are travelling to it, we not only breathe the air, but also enjoy the good things of Canaan itself: for when Jesus dwells in our hearts by faith, we then have possession of the promised inheritance. Our Jesus is all of it to us. Having him, we have it all. Canaan is a wilderness without him. The finest place you can conceive would be no heaven if Jesus was not there. And wherever he is, there heaven is; as the court is, where the king is. "Whom have I even in heaven, but thee?" said blessed David: and one, full of the same Spirit, placed his utmost wishes in being present with the Lord, which he knew was best of all. Our heaven, you know, my friend, is not the place, nor the fine things in it, gold and silver, and precious stones; but it is Jesus, our matchless, loving, lovely Saviour. His presence is to us the fulness of joy.

The common notion of heaven is very much like the Turks' paradise. Writers and preachers generally make it a most glorious place, full of the richest things; and they take care to tell us, there is no pain there, but all pleasure. So it is. But what sort of pleasure? Why, to be with the Lord Christ; to see him face to face; to see him as he is; to behold the glory of God in the person of Christ Jesus, according to our Lord's prayer, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am; that they may behold my glory." This is the highest enjoyment—to behold his glory. They have nothing above this in heaven; and of this faith has some very sweet foretastes below. When the Spirit has drawn our hearts to Jesus, then he gives us daily, by our fellowship with him, happy earnests of the glory which shall be revealed; and we cannot rest till with open face we behold it. All he gives us here only whets the appetite, and makes us wish more for full and perfect enjoyment; as one sweetly sings of the beatific vision, which is the sight of Jesus,

> What we here taste of thy rich grace
> Makes us long more to see thy face;
> We hunger more, and thirst to see
> The heav'n of heavens, Lord, in thee.

If this be the language of your heart, you are indeed breathing the air of Canaan, and partaking, according to your present capacity, of the good things of it. The heir of that promised land is your Saviour, and with him you are an

heir of God, and a co-heir with Christ. Your Hebrew verse proves evidently that you are one of these happy co-heirs; because you are longing for more sweet breathings and heavenly gales of grace, coming from, and drawing you to, Jesus, and thereby assuring you more of the promised inheritance. There are certain means appointed for these purposes, of which, while we make use, may their end be answered in your soul and mine. And

The first is, the word, which is the ministration of righteousness, that exceedeth in glory, being the righteousness not of a creature only, but also of God: for therein is this righteousness revealed from faith to faith. The word is a revelation of the glory of this righteousness of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, discovering to us the Father's grace and love, in placing the fulness of this righteousness, with all its fruits, in his co-equal Son; and the Spirit's grace and love in testifying and glorifying of this fulness, and in bringing the believer to rest safe, and live happy upon it. This is the subject of both testaments, which we shall be studying night and day, and meditating on it with love in our hearts, until we get within the veil, and want no more love-tokens and kind promises from our heavenly lover—he being then ours, with all his glory, in full and never-ending fruition. Here I take shame to myself for reading so little of this precious treasure which breathes throughout the perfumed air of Canaan. Learn, my friend, from my sad experience: and when you read more than I have done, mind,

Secondly, that you read in a constant dependence upon the inward teaching of the Spirit of Jesus. The word is the ministration of the Spirit, by which he is administered, and with which he acts; for he is to the word what light is to the eyes. Let a man have ever such good eyes, he cannot see any thing with them, unless he have light: so the word must have light shining upon it, to make us see it in its clearness and feel it in its power. When he opens the eyes of our understanding, and enlightens them to understand the scripture, one cannot help admiring and adoring what light he throws upon them and what life he puts into them; for he renders them the power of God unto salvation. Then one gets up to Pisgah's top; and not only fine prospects of Canaan's fruitful hills appear, but also her spicy odours perfume the air, and bring us rich foretastes of that good and gracious land. Oh! for more of this Spirit in you and me! He is the very breath of life, to quicken the word. With it in your hand, and him in your heart, you will have the inspiration of the Almighty, and your present knowledge will be but like infancy compared to that maturity to which he will bring you: for,

Thirdly, the word of God, thus explained by the Spirit, will make this material world breathe the air of the spiritual world. The things that are made were therefore made what they are, on purpose to represent and to convey ideas of the invisible things of God. Every outward object is a picture of some inward object: for none of them were made for themselves, but were to reflect and give ideas of something else; namely, of Jesus, and of his spiritual world. Here the scripture philosophy becomes a vast help to a spiritual mind: it represents the world, and all things in it, as mere shadows, and informs us what the true object is which each of them stands for; so that the philosophic mind looks through the sign to the thing signified. Thus all nature preaches grace. Every object speaks something of Jesus; and you cannot open your eyes without being told something of him.

Many are the advantages of viewing things in this light. Such as a continual increase of knowledge. The understanding improves by every object, as it learns to spiritualise every one of them; and it is kept close to the truth: for whatever presents itself to the eye carries its right instruction to the eye of the soul, and thereby becomes profitable to our spiritual and eternal interest.

Temptations are kept out: for they all come from not seeing objects in a true light. The enemy misrepresents, and thereby deceives. Whether he tempts the eye or the heart, he cannot cheat them but by false colours and lies.

The world is kept out; for the spiritual man cannot fall in love with shadows, which all things here are. The whole creation is but a picture: the body and substance is Jesus and his kingdom.

The principal advantage is, conversing and having fellowship with Jesus in every object of which we know the time, nature, and use. When we sit down or walk by the way, eat or drink, or rest, see heaven above with its furniture of sun, moon, &c., or the earth beneath, with its creatures, its products, &c., every thing has a tongue, and reads a lecture concerning Jesus. This the spiritual Psalmist heard when he calls upon all things, animate and inanimate, to join him in praising his Jesus—and a blessed concert they make. My heart has been ravished with hearing the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth, and all that therein is, echoing back again loud praises to his glory. I cannot walk into the garden but flowers and fruits tell me to praise my Jesus. In the fields I am told of him, and that not fancifully, as a sportive imagination may make something out of nothing; but the scripture informs me what such an object represents, and the sight of it raises, the spiritual idea. So that, whatever I rightly understand, it speaks to me of Jesus, and reminds me of something relating to Jesus and to his kingdom. Then, my dear friend, Canaan is kept in view, and we always breathe its pure air. And that incomparably glorious Jesus, who makes Canaan what it is, grows better known, and more beloved. He is become my one study; but I am a very dull scholar. What I have learned is but just enough to make me count all but dross for him; so much remains still to be learnt; he being an infinite and an everlasting good that I am pressing on. Oh how my heart longs for more of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord! And as I get some little advance, fresh views of his glory sink me to the dust. My vileness is most felt in his clear light. The more precious he grows, the more humbling views I get of myself. As Christ rises, self falls. May you find it so: and the more you do find it, so much the more will you breathe the air of Canaan. I know not how to stop, but my paper, against my will, will not let me go any farther. I am yours, very sincerely,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CIV.

Lambeth, *Jan.* 26, 1768.

My dear Friend.—I received your letter of the 8th instant; in which there was the state of your case. I see nothing singular in it. Scarce a day happens, but I meet some or other in your condition, with exactly the same complaints arising from the very same cause. And I have convinced many a one, through the divine blessing, of their interest in Jesus, from the very arguments they made use of to doubt and question it. Were I to draw the true character of a believer, I would put into it every single circumstance that you mention in your letter; and I would undertake to prove that it made strongly for you, and nothing of it against you. It is the very frame and temper of a real Christian. Just as you describe yourself, is every one that is born of God—feels the very things you do, and is never right when he does not feel them; it being the proper work of the Spirit of Jesus to bring all that are under his teaching to be content, to be exactly what you find yourself, that you may be led to live out of yourself upon the fulness of God-Jesus. He is teaching you this lesson, that he may glorify the Saviour in you. But you are a bad scholar, like me, slow to learn, ready to forget, and, what is worse, apt to pervert the divine instruction. You misapply, and put vile constructions upon, the teaching of the Spirit of God, and give a legal turn and cast to his lesson. I can see, as if written with a sunbeam, the disposition of your mind herein, and can trace from my own experience all the turnings and close windings of your present temptations.

I observe what you say of your judgment. You are enlightened to see that Jesus is all in salvation work. The covenant ordered in all things and sure—this is all my salvation, and as far as I know my own heart, this is all my desire. You unsay these words in the same breath you say them: for, because you are not always satisfied with this salvation, or always alike comforted with it, or with equal happiness enjoying the glorious fruits of it, you therefore doubt and reason

about its being yours. Thus you argue: "My judgment is clearly convinced, and my heart desires to be cast wholly upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation; but in the act of doing this, I always fail." What reasoning is here! How directly contrary to the spirit of the gospel! For you are looking not at the object of faith, at Jesus, but at your faith. You would draw your comfort, not from him, but from your faith; and, because your faith is not quite perfect, you are as much discouraged as if Jesus was not a quite perfect Saviour. My dear friend, how sadly does the sly spirit of bondage deceive you! For what is your act of believing? Is it to save you? Are you to be saved for believing? If so, then you put acts and works in the place of the Saviour. And faith, as an act, is in your view part of your salvation. The free grace of the covenant you turn into a work; and how well that work is done becomes the ground of your hope. What a dreadful mistake is this, since salvation is not to him that worketh, but to him that believeth.

But besides this mistake, I can see one of the greatest sins in your way of reasoning, and yet finely cloaked under a very specious covering. I pulled it off, and, behold, there was rank treason under it against the crown and majesty of my Lord and God; for you are kept looking at your act of believing. What is this for? Why, certainly, that you may be satisfied with your faith; and, being satisfied with it, what then? No doubt, you will then rest in it, and upon it, satisfied now that Christ is yours, because you are satisfied with your faith. This is making a Jesus of it, and is in effect taking the crown of crowns from his head, and placing it upon the head of your faith. Lord grant you may never do this any more.

I observe, thirdly, how, by this mistake, and by this great sin, the sin of sins, you are robbed of the sweet enjoyment of the God of all comfort. You lose what you seek, and lose it in your way of seeking. You want comfort; and you look to your faith for it. If faith could speak, it would say, I have none to give you: look unto Jesus; it is all in him. Indeed, my friend, it is. The Holy Ghost the Comforter will not glorify your faith. He will not give it the honour of comforting you. He takes nothing to comfort with but the things of Christ—and his things, not as used by you, but as given from him, who is all yours. This lesson, I think, he is teaching you, although you pervert it. He is bringing you off from looking legally at your faith. He intends you should not regard, as you have done, how you believe, but to settle you in believing. I have been long at this, and have learned but very little. I can say my lesson; but when I come to practise, I find I am a dull scholar. The Spirit of Jesus has been teaching me to draw my comforts, not from how well I believe, but from Jesus, in whom I believe; not from there being no failing in my act of faith, but that I do act faith on Jesus, though failingly. My salvation is quite a distinct thing from any act of mine: it depends on the divine purpose and covenant; is absolutely and eternally fixed in the divine will: and this is made known to me by faith. I receive the evidence of it by believing; and so take possession. Faith is not the cause, but the effect. The cause is the act and grace of the Trinity, what the Father, out of sovereign love, gave; what the Son bought with an inestimable price; and what the Holy Spirit proves to a sinner to be a price every way fully sufficient; and so brings him to depend upon it for his redemption. You see, then, that in consequence of the Father's giving Christ for me, the Holy Spirit brings me to Christ, and enables me to trust and rely upon him. This is all that faith has to do in the matter. It is the fruit and evidence of the covenant grace of the Trinity. At best, it is but an open empty hand, stretched forth at God's bidding, and at God's enabling, to lay hold of Christ: but Christ, so laid hold of, is my salvation. It is not faith, but Christ. It is not my hand, but the thing received into my hand, that saves me. I grant you, and I know it well, that much faith brings much comfort from Christ, and carries much glory to him: but the way to get much faith, is not to look at it as you do, but at the Saviour; not to look at your hand, but at Jesus; not how you hold him, but that he is yours, and holds you, and your faith too; and therefore you shall never perish, but shall have everlasting life.

After I had observed these errors in your looking at the act of faith, I did not

wonder at the following parts of your letter; such as, your not being pleased with your faith, and therefore not pleased with your state, nor your graces, nor your attainments, nor your own righteousness; but you thought every thing made against you. This is still the same teaching of the Spirit; but you pervert it. Have you nothing to look at but Jesus? That's right. Then look unto him, and be saved. What! can you see nothing to rest on of your own? Are you forced to renounce the goodness of your faith, as an act? and do you experience that you cannot be saved for it? Very well: hold fast there. Stick to this: no grace, as acted by you, can save: follow this blessed teaching, and cleave with full purpose of heart unto the Lord Jesus. You must learn to make him all in your salvation. He must save you from your faith, as well as from your unbelief; faith, as you act it, being full of sin. If the highest and best act of your faith were to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, you would deserve a thousand deaths for it. So much corruption would be found in it, that you could not escape the damnation of hell. Turn about, then; take your eyes off from your acts of faith: look at Jesus. Expect to be received as a poor helpless sinner, not for great and high believing. Come to be saved from your faith, as an act. Follow, as all your salvation is laid up in him, follow him; take comfort from him; see yourself in him, not for any thing in you; trust him, not yourself, not your acts, and learn to discern spirits, to know divine teaching, by this mark—that what tends to humble you, is from the glorifier of the Saviour.

Since I sat down to write, I have been many times interrupted; but I was resolved not to be stopped in writing to-day, that you might at least know what could be said of your case. It is a very common one—common to all who are taught of God: so peculiar to them, that, as I said before, if I were to draw the character of a true child of God, I could not leave out one, not a single one, of the circumstances which you bring against yourself. Indeed, Mrs. B., they are all on your side, and witnesses for Christ. Oh do not then stifle, pervert, nor dispute their evidence. Allow what they say—Your faith is not perfect—Your acts fail—All things fail you. Good, very good. Then away with them. Cast off all looking at, all dependence on them. Betake yourself to Jesus; trust him; use him; grow into him; and let nothing separate you from him. So be it, Lord Jesus.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CV.

BLACKFRIARS, *Nov.* 19, 1768.

DEAR MADAM.—Yours came safe to hand. It is Mr. Foster's day to preach his lecture at Duke's Place, and will not suit us, nor him, to be absent that day, Sunday 27th. We have no objection against coming to spend a day or two with you, Monday 28th: and, if we hear nothing to the contrary, shall expect your coach any hour agreeable to you on Monday.

Your account of yourself I was suffered to read; and greatly pleased was I with it. You are just brought to the very spot upon which all are saved to whom Jesus is become dear. It is said of him, "He heareth the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him (her too) that hath NO HELPER." Have you no helper—nothing in yourself—nothing within your reach—to help you? Then, behold, there is a Helper—an Almighty Friend—your Friend because you have no other. My dear Mrs. B., your outward state is the very teacher one would wish—weak, burdened, incapable of attention to spiritual or even to temporal matters. How strongly does all this say, and, while you feel it, continue saying—You are now fit to magnify Jesus; he is the Saviour of the poor destitute—the helpless: he pities you; feels tenderly for you; he knows what you want: he has undertaken to supply your needs. While it is best to be helpless, you shall have his help, which is infinitely better than to feel well. Are you burdened? Cannot you carry it? What does that signify? "I will carry it for

you, says Jesus: cast it on me, I will carry it, and you too." Welcome, then, say I, welcome helplessness, since it is the means of more acquaintance with the help which Jesus gives to his dear afflicted ones. I am certain all is well; I know all will be well with you. Your help is in Jesus: he cannot fail you. Our respects to Mr. B. and all friends. We are, in great love in Jesus, yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CVI.

Blackfriars, *Aug.* 12, 1769.

My dear Friend.—We had a letter from your sister, giving an account of your journey (thanks be to him who kept your going out and your coming in!) and of your present situation and trials, in which I can see nothing singular. The lesson which the Lord is now teaching you, is plain. His way of teaching it has nothing new: it is the established method in his school; and your averseness to learn it occasions all your uneasiness. When he has made you a good scholar, you will then find relief in your soul, whatever befal your poor crazy body.

I take it for granted that you are acquainted with the doctrines of free grace and finished salvation: you are not suffered to doubt of their truth; but you cannot receive comfort from them at this time. Your conscience draws fresh bills of indictment against you. You do not see your interest in your divine Advocate; and therefore you cannot answer them, as you used to do. Hence you are puzzled and mourn; are become impatient and fretful; fear this and the other; and are left to yourself, to your sinkings and dejections, and groundless apprehensions; fancied miseries are felt as real, and fancied fears of dying are as bad as death, yea, worse than death will ever be to you. This is something like your case. Is it not? And what is to be done? Where is the remedy? Certainly our All-wise physician has left some prescription for it; and he can make it, bad as it is, work under him for good. But how? Why, he would teach you now one of his highest lessons, and you are brought into circumstances most exactly suited for your being a proficient in it. He intends in this (as in all things) to promote his own glory as the Alpha and Omega of your salvation; not only in working of it out, for he has satisfied you of this, but also in the security of it; he must have all the honour of the safe-keeping of it—it for you, and you for it. He is the Keeper of Israel, who keeps all the Israel of God by the power of God; and you cannot glorify him, in this his great covenant office, but by giving up your body and soul, you and yours, absolutely to his keeping. And how could you be taught this in a shorter or better way than by being brought into your present distress? For you now find that you can no more secure and keep than you could work out your salvation: he must do it all—begin, carry on, and finish. This is your lesson. Finding yourself, then, in this situation, utterly helpless, without any thing good in you—a poor, dejected, fearful, destitute creature—commit the keeping of your soul to Jesus: you will thereby bring him a richer revenue of honour than all the rejoicing Christians in the world. You will glorify his faithfulness to his word and work by venturing upon that arm of the Lord which is engaged to do all for you, and all in you. Mind one of his sublime styles and titles:—He is the Saviour of him that hath no helper. What! have you no help? Do you feel it? Then the Spirit says, he is your Saviour. Mrs. B., he is yours, as surely as he ever saved any one who had no helper.

But, alas! how weak is my faith! My dear friend, do not look at the *how;* that will only puzzle you; it will make believing to be a work, and will tempt you to be comforted when you believe well, and to be dejected when you are displeased with your believing. You know it is not the degree or the joy of faith that saves; but it is Jesus who saves; and your safety arises from trusting to the work of God-Jesus, and your comfort should spring from taking it to yourself upon the warrant of God's free offer to sinners like you; not to qualified

sinners, but to coming sinners—"Whosoever cometh unto Jesus:" it matters not how he comes, nor who he be, nor what he has been; to him coming, God gives his word, and pledges his honour "Thou shalt never, never perish; but shalt have everlasting life." Whether he come fainting, live fainting, or die fainting, it is the same; the word cannot be broken, but standeth fast for ever and ever. Mrs. B. fainting, dejected, without spirits or liveliness, comes; she shall never, never perish, says God; she shall have everlasting life.

But what signifies the truth of this to me, while I find no comfort in believing? Your case does not admit of comfort; the Master is carrying you up into a more exalted state of believing, wherein we are to get above baby comforts. You could not learn the present lessons of his love in a comfortable frame: he therefore brings you into the valley of Baca, to teach you what Jesus is in himself, and that all your salvation is in him undertaken, fulfilled, applied; and that, after all your knowledge, and all your experience, you have nothing, to this moment, to depend on but his faithful arm and watchful care. This is his last lesson: nothing is beyond it but heaven. You are left to your present distresses on purpose to learn this. Your dear Jesus lets you feel how utterly helpless you are, that you may find how faithful he is to his promised help. He is as exactly suited to your case as light is to your eyes; and your relief does not consist in getting comfort again, but in getting nearer to Jesus, and in seeing what he is to such as you, and thereby growing up more into him. Your present frame is to bring you to commit the keeping of yourself and of all your concerns to him. You find you can do nothing—quite lifeless, heartless, comfortless. Very well: but Jesus has undertaken to keep such; and he is now making you willing that he should be your keeper. Oh that you would not reason and puzzle your poor heart, but follow his teaching: and now, simply leave it to him, to do what he will: your salvation will then be as safe in his hands as if you were in heaven.

And why should not you simply trust him? Consider, you cannot honour his office as your keeper; you cannot bring him more glory than others do but by coming as the weeakest of all creatures. You find you are so. Why, then, let his strength be perfected in your weakness. You see you can do nothing; let him, then, have the crown of doing all. What sad work would you make, if your graces or comforts were left to your own keeping! You are learning now to put no confidence in the flesh. Oh that you may yield to the Spirit's leading, and may be willing to be just what your God would have you to be!

But how can you do this under these faintings, sinkings, &c.? These are your schoolmasters. You could not learn without them your absolute dependence upon God-Jesus: and you experience these on purpose that you may find how careful Jesus is over you. He has the same love to your soul, the same faithfulness to his own work, when you have no strength, as at other times. He says so—"I change not"—I am the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—the same to the fainting as to the rejoicing believer. Oh fall then fainting into his arms: venture—cast yourself upon him; for he is a very present help in every time of trouble.

You see I have no more room. I follow my advice with my prayers. I pity you much for what you suffer: but I wish God may let you see it as I do. Still all is well. May you say so! Our love to the whole family. We set out on Tuesday: in about three weeks hope to be at Mr. Owen's, jun. at Tiverton, Devon, where a line will find us, and a good account make us thankful. Mrs. B., I am as certain as I live of the Lord's design, as mentioned above. Read as you can bear it, and pray for light to know, and faith to follow the Lord's leading. It is a dark night, and a long night; but the morning cometh, and you shall rejoice with the gladness of his people. Farewell.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CVII.

BERWICK, *near* SHREWSBURY, *Sept.* 9, 1769.

DEAR MADAM.—We were setting out upon our journey when we received Miss M.'s letter, and have scarce had any resting time since. No opportunity offered, till the present, of sitting down to inform you of my constant remembrance of you in my prayers. My daily petition is, that God may bring you to submit to his will, and to make you lie in his hands just what you are—a lump of sinful clay—that in his own way he may mould you, and form you, a vessel of honour. Oh, this is hard!—to flesh and blood it is impossible. To have been, like you, in light, but now in darkness; to have walked in comfort, but now every ray of it gone; to suffer the disease, but no feeling of the remedy. Who can bear up under such trials? None can of themselves: but I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me. So he said, who rejoiced to be what you are: he was not only content to be a pensioner, living on the mere grace of Jesus, but he also gloried in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Every infirmity brought him to feel more what you now feel yourself to be: but this did not keep him from Christ, as it does you; nay, rather, it brought him to greater experience of the power of Christ, in so managing his infirmities, as to make them the means of nearer communion and more intimate fellowship.

My dear friend, I must repeat it—although you tell me my last was a probe, rather than an healing-medicine—your present frame is necessary; you really want to learn the lesson which it is sent to teach you. Without it, how could our great prophet bring you to live entirely out of self upon his fulness, which, when he is teaching, how do you murmur and repine? Whatever you knew of this before, it is plain you had it but in theory; for the practice has quite overset you. You cannot believe, although the ground of believing stand good, unless you have the comfort of believing: for, now you are left to yourself, you think you are lost, because you are suffered to feel what a poor miserable creature you are: not considering that, bad as your condition is, yet there is a remedy for it, hope under it, and a good end to be answered by it. There is a remedy infallible, which you overlook at this time, although it be as exactly suited to your case, as meat is to the hungry. What! have you forgotten the covenant of the eternal Three—the Father's everlasting appointment concerning those whom he gave to his Son? None of them can be lost. The Son's accepting them as the Father's gift, undertaking for them, writing their names in his book, becoming man, living and dying for them: and, by these his relations to them, he is their head, and they are his members, one with him, and he one with them, in a bond which nothing can break; and the Holy Spirit given to them and dwelling in them, to work all their works for them and in them, and to keep them safe by his mighty power, till they be received into glory. This is the covenant of the blessed Trinity; in which it is enacted and provided, that nothing should befal you but what is for your good; yea, that the very state you are in, which is one of the sad fruits of the corruption of your nature, shall be so overruled as, in the end, to promote the gracious plan of your salvation. Do you not know, Mrs. B.; do you not believe all this? You do—I am certain you do—in theory. I pray you, then, what is it that obstructs your practice? How is it that your present trials, which are working for your good, which must do you good, being appointed and sent for this very purpose, are so mistaken and misapplied? You are left to reason against God's covenant purposes, and to pervert (as far as you can) God's gracious design. You may go on indulging this strange temper; but know, assuredly, my good friend, that God will not only save you, notwithstanding your vile reasonings against him, but will also make you one day acknowledge that it was good for you you had been in this trouble; for still there is hope. Hope is grounded upon some promise; and God has not left you without a word of promise to trust in. His covenant, made for you, is ordered in all things, and sure. This dark, dead frame is ordered; all your nervous feelings, faintings, &c. are ordered; all things—how much you should suffer—

how long—till you should be forced to acknowledge God just in his dealings with you. And though you may try to break his covenant, reason against it, indulge your own absurd reasonings, give place to unbelief; yet, his covenant he will not break for the sake of your peevishness. No, he will not. It is sure in all things—as sure to one walking in darkness as to one walking in light—always alike sure on God's part, though to your feeling it may look as if he was going to alter it. Could this blessed truth break in upon your soul, and shine in its divine glory, then you would be made to see that your present frame is most mercifully intended to teach you in experience the faithfulness of God's covenant: for now you find you can do nothing. What more seasonable, what more comfortable, than to be satisfied that your salvation is in safe hands, and that God is managing it so well, that it cannot possibly miscarry? Thus would hope revive, and soon be able to bring in strong consolation; for you would discover many gracious ends answered by your having gone through this dark, and dull, and helpless state. Depend upon it, good will come out of your distrustful murmurings and unbelieving repinings. God will get a rich revenue of glory, when he has brought you to experience that all your salvation was out of yourself, and to be willing to take it, and to enjoy it, as the free gift of free grace, in every comfort, in every blessing, both in earth and in heaven. You are put to school to learn this, and to trust God simply; and sad work you make of your lesson—you read it backward. He would teach you that salvation itself, and every thing belonging to it, is at his absolute disposal; and therefore he keeps you at school, and under sharp discipline too, because you are so dull at your book. Oh that you may be made to feel all is well! David was once in your case; and he had a blessed issue. So will you have. Read the 130th Psalm, and mark where he began. He was in the *depths*, and he ended in the *heights*. After the dark and black night, the morning will arise—a morning without clouds—and your soul shall be glad and rejoice in the salvation of our God Much, much glory will then accrue to him from your present visitation.

Perhaps, you say, these things may be true, but how can I take any comfort from them while I am in my present distress? Why not? They are the remedies prescribed of God for your very case, to give you a good ground of hope at present, and to produce the most blessed effects in future. The Lord the Spirit seal these things upon your heart; and may it please him to do it soon. His time is best; but, for your sake, I would plead with him, lest you should quite faint. But that will not be. You know I do not follow impressions unwarranted by the word. I give little credit to any thing of that kind. But here I have the word on my side—that God will not leave you nor forsake you; and I am persuaded, you will soon know you are not left. To my apprehension, the clouds are breaking; the storm is dispersing fast; the day-star is dawning; and your own Jesus is rising with the light of life upon your soul—never, never to set again. It is but a very, very little while, and you shall see the King in his beauty, as you never saw him before. So be it. *Amen.*

LETTER CVIII.

BLACKFRIARS, *Feb.* 22, 1770.

GRACE and peace be multiplied to our dear friends at S.—Mrs. B., take the light of the word, and behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon you! what were his purposes of grace in giving you to his Son (admire and adore them!) in revealing them to you by his Spirit, and in bringing you to know your Father, which is in heaven—what! but that you might come to enjoy him who is your supreme happiness. You do enjoy him—glory be to his sovereign grace! but pray mind, you enjoy him now as a fallen creature. You are brought back to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. The Son was your surety; the Father accepted him in your stead; the Spirit has enabled you to believe that the Father loves you perfectly in his Son: thus you come to the enjoyment

of the Eternal Three; but not such as you will have in heaven. The manner of enjoying God is different. Here it is by faith; there by sense: here by hard fighting; there by constant peace: here sensual are always opposing and lessening spiritual enjoyments; there all are spiritual: here the enjoyment of God is at best imperfect; there it is absolutely perfect. Here, as you are made up of flesh and spirit, sensible enjoyments must be withdrawn, in order to make room for spiritual; the absence of sensible is necessary for the growth of spiritual. On which account I cannot but bless God for you, who takes so much pains with you. He has chosen you to better things than the world has to give. Your portion is not here below. God himself is your portion; and all his dealings with you are to bring you to enjoy him as such. He ploughs and harrows, and takes every method to get a good crop. He rains and shines, sends winds and storms, frost and snow; but all fulfilling his word. His frowns and his smiles have one lesson. Sickness in yourself, in your family, in your other self, are covenant visitations, and speak aloud, "Mrs. B., you are the Lord's, and he will not let you alone, he will not suffer you to settle upon your lees; you must be kept stirring—all peace and quiet would be your ruin: therefore God, even your God, has, in his richest love, weighed out every grain of suffering, needful to keep you near to God."

But why have I got preaching? You do find it true—I know you do—that the time of living by the faith of the Son of God has always most sweetness when the life of sense is lowest in its enjoyments. Lord grant you may daily make up your happiness in God, your covenant God and Father, and in those things which improve in the using when all other happiness fails. *Amen.*

I am with great respect, in the only bond of true love, yours in Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CIX

Blackfriars, *Aug.* 3, 1772.

My dear Friend.—I have been taught to feel your case, and to have compassion. We have a sympathising God, who also is touched with the feeling of your infirmities; and he wants you to know the tenderness of his heart. He would give you proof of it, and fresh experience. This is his gracious lesson. If he take away more creature comforts than he ever did before, it is, that he may make room for more of his heavenly comforts. He thwarts your will, that he may make you resigned to his. He is aiming at your good, and taking the shortest and the best way to promote it. He afflicts your children, removes your friends, gives you real trouble, and threatens to give greater; but all is love. He knows it expedient for you to deny yourself, to take up your cross daily, and to follow him in the way he went to glory. I have seen a wonderful beauty in 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31, as applicable to your present circumstances. Read and study the passage. Pray you may be enabled to practise what is there recommended; *viz.* "That having husband, children, &c. you may live as though you had none," &c.

It may give you some pleasure to hear that we do not go from home till next week. In the mean time, should be glad of one line to know your state and condition, and how all the family do. Considering our dear Lord's past kindness to you, I have no doubt of his continuing it. I heartily pray him, in which my wife joins, to convince you of his unchangeable love, and to manifest it to your heart in time of need. I am (with respect to Mr. B.) yours, in our precious and covenant head,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CX.

Jan. 26, 1775.

My good Friend.—Indeed, it is a great while since we met; and I often think of it. At no time or place do I forget you. But am more mindful when I hear of you, especially of your wants: I believe you cannot do without them; and I feel my heart, as Christ is, most affected to you when you are poor and needy, and have no helper. As such, in your present case, I spread your needs before my Lord and your Lord. He knows what is best for you, and will do it, although you may be apt to quarrel with him for it. But he will not mind that; he will pardon it, and will go on doing you good—in his own way.

Next Monday is the 30th of January: I always preach in the afternoon, before the Leather Sellers' company: the Monday after, we are at your service: we hope to be ready to come down and dine with you in very good time.

What changes in six months time—born, married, dead! what patience exercised to us! we are spared. What grace! spared to live, in, upon, and to Jesus. Oh most blessed long suffering! And what now wait we for? Why truly, being as ready to die as ever we shall be, that, come what will this new year, we may be found in Jesus. In this hope I go on my way rejoicing. So may you.

My partner is pretty well: desires every kind remembrance to you. Our christian love to Mr. B. I carry all your family to court with me, and recommend them to my King. I hope he has a regard for them. I am sure of it. If you forget to pray for me, you will not be a friend to yourself. I am, very sincerely, your friend and servant, in our common Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXI.

London, *March* 7, 1778.

Mrs. C. presented me, in your name, with the brethren's daily words for 1778: for which I thank you, and through it, may be often put in good remembrance of you and yours this year. In return, I send you my word.

Messiah is one of the high titles of the Redeemer, which being interpreted in the Greek, is, The Christ, and in the English, is, The Anointed. Oil was the instituted emblem of the grace of the Holy Spirit, and anointing with oil was the outward and visible sign of his inward and spiritual grace. We meet with the institution, Exodus xxx. 22, to the end. This holy ointment was to be used in consecrating the tabernacle and all its vessels, and in setting apart certain persons for some great offices. It was unlawful to use it upon any other occasion: whosoever did, was to be cut off from the people. This consecrating unction was used to the tabernacle, which was a type of the body of Christ, and to every vessel of the tabernacle, to show that Christ, and every thing of Christ, was under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit; and it was used to set apart the Prophet, Priest, and King, because he was to sustain those offices. He was the anointed Saviour. His human nature was conceived and formed by the Holy Ghost. Every thought of his mind, every motion of his body, was under influence, and that every moment: for he had the Spirit without measure. He had infinite grace to obey, to suffer, to conquer. Nothing could possibly be wanting to render his obedience, sufferings, and victories absolutely complete and everlastingly perfect. We have a demonstration of their full value and acceptance. He died; but rose from the dead. He sitteth at the right hand of the majesty on high, infinitely replenished with the graces and gifts of the eternal Spirit: yea, in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Here is the fountain of all blessings. His name shows not only that he is thus anointed, but means one who has the power to give the unction of the Holy One. He, as head, has it for his members, which is beautifully described, Psalm cxxxiii.

The precious ointment, poured upon the head of the high priest, flowed down to the skirts of his garments: so does the spiritual anointing. On Christ it was poured without measure. From him it descends to the lowest member. Every believer has his share of its divine influence. The Spirit of Christ is given to quicken the dead. He unites the soul to Christ: he enables it to live by faith upon Christ, and to live to the glory of Christ: and therefore this anointing is absolutely necessary: without it, no man can be a member of Christ: for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. A Christian means, one who has received the unction from Christ. The same spirit which is in the head is also in the member: for he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, and is as intimately united, yea, I think more, than the body and soul in one person. This constitutes the Christian. He has actually the Spirit of Christ; whereby he is one with Christ, and Christ with him. Christ dwelleth in him, and he in Christ: or, as the apostle expresses it, I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Christ was his life, as truly as any member lives by its union with the head, as evidently as a branch is nourished by the sap received from the stock upon which it grows. The anointing which he receives from Christ makes and constitutes him a real Christian, as certainly as the member lives by its oneness with the head, or the branch with the vine. Our Lord's name, the Messiah, leads us to consider him in this view, not only anointed himself, but also the giver of the same grace; he having received it on purpose that he might give it to his people. By his own command it was first used at Antioch; and it has been ever since the peculiar title of those who profess faith in him and influence from him.

Many, indeed, have the name without the thing; as a man may be called rich who is very poor. But such are not Christians. They have a name to live, while they are dead. But he who is truly so called has actual fellowship with Christ by his Spirit. What was on Christ, without measure, is on him according to the measure of the gift of Christ. He partakes of the divine anointing. He is called, after Christ, a Christian: for he is made alive, and lives, and acts, by the same spirit that is in Christ, who is head over all things to his church, which is his body—the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

But if it be thus certain that the head and the members have the same unction, how can any one know it? Should it not be very clear, as it is the thing which makes the Christian? Certainly it should. And the scripture leaves no doubt concerning the way and means in which it is to be known.

Known by believing; ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. The word is the ministration of the Spirit. We are begotten by it, nourished by it: holding the truth in love, we grow up into Christ in all things.

How is this unction enjoyed? In the same way as known. The influence of the Spirit of Christ keeps up, through faith, communion with the head and members, testifying of Christ, glorifying of Christ.

How is it improved? By daily use we get more faith, more hope, more love to Christ, more happiness in the Father's love in Christ, whereby we learn more subjection to his will and ways.

In this new year, I wish you new grace, fresh unction; yea, may you be every day anointed with fresh oil—much fellowship with him—your guide—your keeper, your Saviour. I have only time to pray for you and yours. Mrs. R., with real love, wishes you the same unction. Farewell. Pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXII.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—I was at the dedication of your new house, and consecrated it. May my prayers be answered—your house a Bethel—your heart also a temple—and all your family temples of the Holy Ghost! I send you, inclosed, a little book upon prayer, in order to stir you up to it; for yourself as your privilege, and for the public as your duty. I wish you much sweet communion

in conversing with your God, and much freedom in pleading with him for this guilty land. When you have read the tract, and Mr. B., please to lend it to Mr. H. with my love.

The weather is very hot. I am tired of London. Next week I hope to leave it for some time. Our course is to Birmingham and the neighbourhood. We fully purpose, God willing, to see you, eye to eye, before the winter.

I esteem it my blessing to be interested in all your concerns. Our right spirit is to rejoice with our rejoicing members. And to be any way well, in so great a family as yours, is matter of daily thankfulness and joy. Learn, at the white side of God's dealings, to admire them. See how many mercies, how great, as well as how many trials: though trials rightly improved are mercies. I will not cease to ask for what your Lord knows to be sufficient grace. Mrs. R. is well, and sends every kind remembrance to you and to yours. I am, with true christian love, your obliged friend and servant, in our common Lord,

W. ROMAINE.

N. B. We have several praying societies already set up; and, next Sunday, if you have my letter in time, and can meet us, you will have the best company in England with you at the throne of grace. My heart rejoices in the prospect: so be it.

LETTER CXIII.

WEYMOUTH, *Oct.* 11

DEAR MADAM.—I have an opportunity of sending you some good news, which I wish may affect your heart, as it has mine. I left you ill, and grew worse, till we got to Weymouth. The air, bathing, rest, have been greatly useful in restoring health, spirits, and thankfulness.

Out of the twenty good days in October, we have ten altogether. Ever since we left Bristol, fine weather and serene skies, and most refreshing sea breezes. How faithful is our God! He is crowning the year 1777 with his goodness. Indeed, he is always the same—love itself—but we change: and for want of continual trusting, we lose many tokens of his favour. Could you, for instance, always build upon this rock, thus saith the Lord, how fixed would your state be, hanging on his unchangeable will! how numerous your comforts, depending on his infallible word! His will is only known from his word; and his word abideth for ever. As he has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Your dejections, sinkings, alter nothing in God—nor in his will, or word. And they come to teach you this. May you learn to renounce leaning to self, good or bad; and may you ever build on the rock that is higher than you. For it is Christ, the rock of ages; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. We say, when the sun revisits Virgo, then we shall revisit you: but a thousand unforeseen things, besides death, may hinder us from meeting any more upon earth. Our visits are short. They disappoint us. We are apt to expect from them what is only to be found in Him. We bear the pain of parting, in hopes of meeting again. When he visits once, it is for ever: not with continual comforts, or abiding presence, but with a promise—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The faith of this will make your mountain sure when every thing else says, it will be cast into the midst of the sea. Only believe. Having a little of that faith which worketh by love, I can feel how the members, under the same head, sympathise. Distance makes no difference. The head is in heaven; the members on earth: yet, one Spirit breathing through both, they rejoice and mourn together; which is heavenly friendship. Oh for more of it in human hearts! I am not without it to Mr. B. and every one of your family. If it be right, I could wish you a sky like ours, without a cloud—a voyage through life like ours, a sea like glass, without a ruffle: but, be it as it may to-day, to-morrow—a sky without a vapour, a sea like glass, smooth for ever and ever, will be your happy lot. There we shall meet,

and bless the kind hand of our Jesus for mutual as well as for personal salvation You know there is nothing good you wish yourself, or yours, which Mrs. R. does not wish you as well as

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXIV.

Blackfriars, *March* 30, 1778.

My dear Friend.—I am glad the Lord will not let you alone. He is very kind to you, and takes a deal of pains to make you a great proficient in his school. He has put you into the upper form, and you have but one lesson to get; and that he will teach you himself. You must have no under-master. He will not suffer it. Not only because they are incapable of teaching this hard lesson, but also because he will have all the glory of it. "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross daily, and follow me." The cross is the badge and honour of discipleship. He puts it on. He instructs in the true way to take it up—in the right method of bearing it—and he gives all the profit which comes from it. I have prayed him to teach you how to follow him: and, as he has you now in his hands, prayer for his blessing is worth all the fine lessons in the world. Indeed, they are apt to do hurt; because they take the eye off from his hand and his rod, and incline us to hearken to reason more than to faith. It is one great design of the cross, to bring us to have nothing to do with any person or thing, but with Christ alone: he sends it to wean us from the world, reason, sense, and self. O blessed cross! which deadens us to them, and makes us more alive to Jesus. May every cross have this effect upon you! Remember, just so many comforts as you have, so many crosses may you have. The cross grows out of the comfort. The dearer the comfort, the bitterer the cross. What a large provision have you for suffering!—husband—children—substance—friends—farms—servants, &c. &c. The good Master sees how desirous you are to go to heaven with this and the other comfort. You think, he might very well spare it to you, being such an infinitely loving Jesus: you might keep it, and yet keep his love. But he knows better than you do what is good for you; he loves you, far better than you do yourself; and he will manifest it to you: yea, you shall feel in your heart that his almighty love can bring you good out of evil, and pleasure out of pain. Now he wants to communicate this. At this very time he is training you up for it. He is going to bestow upon you some of his choicest favours: and he has such a certain fixed way of giving them, that I know his mind and will as plainly here at London as if I was at S., and you were to tell me all your thoughts: for indeed I find him very communicative to his friends. He keeps nothing from them. And the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, &c. No; Abraham is of my court; and I will make him of my cabinet. The same Lord has said to you and me, henceforth I call you not servants, but friends," &c. John xv. Our divine teacher still makes known to us what he doeth. It is your business and your happiness to wait on him for the discovery of his will in his present dealings with you, that you may be able to do it, or patient to suffer it. This he expects of you. And may all within you say, from a feeling submission, "Lord Christ! not my will, but thine, be done."

I am thankful for the grace given to Mr. B. May it increase and abound yet more and more. I am yours, in our ever dear and lovely Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXV.

To the Rev. Mr. K.

April 11, 1789.

My dear Brother.—The famous Dr. Johnson declares, "that a man of genius may force himself to write whenever he pleases." If he found it so, I do not. I cannot even write a letter when I will: if I could, Mr. K. would have received an answer before this time. Indeed, I do not wish to be of the doctor's mind; for I find the activity of our nature is a perpetual temptation to look upon ourselves as something. It seems to me safer and better to feel that every exertion of mind and body depends upon the grace of another—life, and breath, and all things. Say, Here is a fine garden; but who planted it? Say, There are fragrant flowers; but unless the north wind awake, and the south come, what is there to make the sweet spices thereof to flow out? The soul is as much dependent on the fresh supplies of the Spirit as the body is upon breath: so that the feeling of my poverty is my only riches, and the sense of my weakness is my only strength. If I write a letter, if any good accompany it, I wish ever to ascribe the praise to Him, without whom, "we," says a blessed man, "even we, are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think one good thought." What possibly can be more humbling? And what can be more opposite to the doctor's spirit? Let him, and such, plume themselves upon their self-exertions; but we have learned Christ better. In his school we know that the humblest is the highest; and he does most for Christ, or rather Christ does most in him, who is sensible that, without Christ, he can do nothing. This is the Christian principle of all our activity; because, through Christ strengthening us, we can do all things.

Upon this ground I thank you for your letter, as I have already thanked him who enabled you to write such a letter. And upon the same ground I compliment you on your Sermon,* which is the first in time; and, without being a prophet, I foretel that it will be the first in many other senses. Blessed be his holy name! who sent us such a cordial from S. Indeed, it greatly refreshed my spirits; and my partner desires me to tell you, that she partook of my joy. We also rejoiced together in the account you gave of yourself and family. How great, how many mercies—mercies upon mercies—in what you have, and what you have not! God himself being your portion. His will becomes yours: not yours; as it is the will of the flesh. This is still the same, and will be as long as you breathe: but he makes the flesh bow to the spirit, and enables the renewed heart to say, and truly, "Father, this is a sharp stroke; but I know it was sent in love: as such I kiss the rod—Thy will be done." Glory be to him who gives grace sufficient to bear with patience, yea, to improve with profit, our greatest trials, even to sacrifice our Isaacs. Oh! he is faithful, as you can witness, to that sweet abridgment of his gospel, when rejecting the outward ceremonies as nothing availing, unless mixed with faith, Psalm l. 14, 15; and a little lower, "Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me."

Your letter just came up to my wishes for its being so very particular with respect to your own family and to the T.'s. It is a great favour to me, who am now only a chamber counsellor, to know the circumstances of my friends, their children, and families, that I may advise, and pray for suitable grace. You give me fresh matter to ask for yourself—Success to the preached gospel at Southampton. May he help you always to give your people good food, and to bless them with an appetite, that they may be nourished, and grow thereby up into Christ Jesus, and that in all things. Our kindest love to the T.'s. Mr. and Mrs. will hear from me as soon as I can. This is with us a season of much preaching: and, although it be the very joy of my heart to be telling of his salvation, yet the flesh fails, and lags sadly behind. Pray for me and mine,

W. Romaine.

* A most excellent sermon on the king's recovery.

LETTER CXVI.

April 20, 1791.

Dear Sir.—I think myself very much beholden to you for two very obliging letters. The first was alarming; it stirred up many fears, and made me give myself unto prayer. Your second relieved us from our apprehensions, but not from our prayers. We are still before him who hears and answers. When we have done this in faith, we must leave it with him; and then, whatever he does, I am sure it cannot be done better. May Sally be a tender object of his care and love, as well as her poor afflicted mother! She is scarce ever out of my mind, knowing what she feels on this occasion. But what are our real and best feelings for one another compared to the compassions of our Jesus? May he refresh her heart with some of his choicest consolations! Mrs. R. says, *Amen.*

Tell Mr. T. he should keep a feast of thanksgiving, not one day, but as many days as he has to live. Oh what a monument is he of the distinguishing favours of our God! Every breath should be praise. I hope he is trying, and I pray for him, that more grace may be given, and, under such a load of benefits, he may walk more humbly with his God.

I know S. and you are on my heart. May the work of the Lord prosper in your hands!

If Mr. T. does not write, one line to satisfy us how you go on, and what is Sally's state, will be a very great treat to me and my partner, who most cordially joins in the prayer of faith for the T.'s, K.'s, with your friend and labourer in the Lord's vineyard,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXVII.

Jan. 15, 1795.

My dear Sir.—This is one of your children,* whom you was instrumental in bringing to light. I put it into your hands, hoping you will continue to nurse it with your prayers for its success, and with thanks to the author of every good and perfect gift, who has enabled me to leave behind me this testimony of his saving grace and power. Oh bless him and praise him for his great goodness to your friend and servant in him,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXVIII.

*To A**** D****, Esq.*

My dear Friends,—for so you are in the Lord; in that bond which he ties and none can untie. Thanks to Mr. T. for his letter, and for his kind remembrance of us. We are, as to outward things, just as you left us—but, I hope not at a stand in spirituals—moving still, and getting on, halting, and creeping, slowly, but surely. How this is to be done, in what way, means, and method, would save you a deal of time and trouble, if you were quite satisfied. I will give you a little plan of what I call

A*******'s daily walk.

I had observed, a great deal of my time was spent—and most of it quite lost. A very, very little was left. I saw the necessity of husbanding it well, and of making the most of it. This led me to settle and determine a fixed rule of

* This letter was accompanied with a copy of the Triumph of Faith.

living. "Here is a new day. What lies before me to be done? What do I live for to-day? What am I now to propose to myself, as the end and aim of all my actions?" This matter was brought to a point: and I was made to see that these, and these only, were the things I was to do.

First, I was to look to my conscience; that the peace of God might rule in it always, and by all means.

Secondly, I was to look to my heart; that it might be happy in the love of God; and,

Thirdly, I was to watch over my tempers, my walk, and my conversation; that I might enjoy the peace and the love of God.

I saw my main business concerned my conscience; how guilt, fear, and unbelief might be kept out of it, and the peace of God might be maintained in it. If conscience be good, all is good: and that is a good conscience which witnesses to the truth, as it is in Jesus. Conscience is that faculty of the soul which compares my heart and life with the holy law of God, brings me in guilty for transgressing its precepts, and leaves me to suffer its just penalties, under guilt and condemnation. The gospel offers a perfect righteousness to satisfy the precepts, and an infinitely valuable atonement—the sacrifice of God—to satisfy the penalties of the law. By believing in this righteousness, and in this atonement, the conscience is saved from guilt and condemnation, yea, acquits and justifies the sinner, and brings in a true verdict for him. It says what God does, pleads its discharge under the broad seal of heaven, and stops the mouth of guilt and unbelief, with these words written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace: "Thou art forgiven all trespasses—Thou art justified from all things—Thou art a son of my love and an heir of my glory, through faith in Jesus, my beloved." Here, Mr. D., I triumph. I believe these words on the divine testimony. My conscience bears witness to their truth. It is a good conscience: it agrees with God, and looks upon him as reconciled perfectly. It fears to dishonour him by calling in question the infinite value of Christ's righteousness and atonement, or doubting of their being mine, while they are freely offered to me, and while I find my want of them, and have any dependence upon them. Thus the peace of God rules, takes the lead in the conscience, rules always, the offer being always the same, the righteousness and atonement of Jesus always the same, my want of them always the same, and mine interest in them always the same: which I daily learn to maintain by all means, against all corruptions, enemies, and temptations, from every quarter. Tell Mrs. D. from me, that this is her first lesson in the school of Christ. When she feels any thing wrong, she is low, her sins displease, her duties cannot please her; tell her that these very things, if rightly managed, will establish her conscience in the peace of God. Every new day she lives to learn that she has nothing to trust to but the atonement and righteousness of Jesus, and therefore to depend on God's being in friendship with her—an unchangeable friendship through Jesus Christ her Lord. Oh that her heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience and mind! That is evil, which refuses to build its peace on the life and death of our Immanuel; and that is a good conscience which has peace with God through faith in Jesus, and expects all the love of God freely in him. This is my second work, to keep my heart happy. And this I constantly experience when the conscience is on Christ's side, and testifies aright for him. God is reconciled. He is my God. We are agreed, and now we walk together. He hids me call him Father. He has bowels of love and fatherly affection for me. He sees me in Jesus—loves me—yea, blesses me in him. My title is clear to all spiritual blessings, because God, being my God in Jesus, all things are mine. My happy walk is in the belief of this, and in the enjoyment of it. I do not aim at getting any new title to my heavenly Father's love, but new enjoyment. All is mine in title; but I want more and more possession. Every day I am seeking to know more, to enjoy more of the riches of the Father's love in Jesus; and I find no way to come at them but faith, and no way to increase faith so effectually as to keep the peace of God ruling in the conscience always, and by all means.

Observe, sir—When you want to enjoy the love of God, and in the enjoyment

of it to find your heart happy, look at nothing to bring it you but Jesus; read your share in it; take possession of it; for nothing done in you, or by you, now, or at any time, but only for and in Jesus; his atonement, his righteousness, being your constant title to the love of his Father and of your Father. Thus walk with a reconciled God. Christ is your way. Christ your end. Go on; leaning on Christ every step for strength; relying on Christ for victory over corruptions and enemies, whatever within or without would try to stop you in your way; trusting Christ for blessings, whatever can keep you safe and make you happy all your way; making his company and presence your heaven here, as well as in glory. Thus the true believer walks with God; and the sense of his being a child of God, and the experience of his Father's precious love, makes him happy. And this mortifies the carnal heart, crucifies worldly tempers, subdues creature love: God in Christ enjoyed being the death of every selfish affection.

Pray tell Mrs. D. of this. If she would daily walk with a happy heart, she must learn to make up all her happiness in the love which God has for her in his dear Son. She must look quite away from her graces, her gifts, her righteousness, her duties. God does not love her for these: he loves her in his Son; and she, in believing this, is to find all her salvation, and to enjoy all her happiness. I know her temptations, and therefore go on to the

Third and last thing which enters deep into my daily walk: and that is—How my tempers are to be regulated, and my conversation ordered, that I may night and day enjoy the peace and the love of my reconciled God and Father. I find this very hard work, because it is so hard to keep peace in the conscience and the love of God in the heart ruling always. But God's Spirit is almighty to teach this lesson, and to give power to practise it. And I cannot deny him his honour. What I have learned of him has been chiefly from this scripture: Walk humbly with thy God. He is my God: I walk humbly with him in Christ, as mine; so his sweet peace is enjoyed, his happy love possessed: while these rule in the conscience, and in tne heart, the power of the Spirit maintains his influence over the tempers and over the life and conversation, and he keeps all in subjection to God-Jesus. The conscience says, I will have nothing to do with any thing for salvation but the righteousness of Jehovah Jesus and his atonement on the tree. The heart says, This is all my desire. Hope says, I have cast my anchor on Jesus, I cannot be disappointed. Fear says, I would not for the world offend my God and Father. Then the whole man bows in subjection to Father, Son, and Spirit, and says, Lord God, rule in me, rule over me; guide, keep, bless me and mine all the way to heaven. You see, my good friend, from whence I draw my safety and my happiness. Not from self—oh, no!—but from God in Christ: I look not at, depend not on, not in the least, myself; but wholly on my God. Whatever is of mine own, and comes from myself, shows me the necessity of walking humbly with my God. Self consists, as I feel to this hour, of wants, miseries, temptations. These do not stop me, but help me to walk more humbly with my God. They show me my constant want of salvation, and keep me constantly dependent on it. No failings in duty, no sense of indwelling sin, keep me from my reconciled God and Father, but bring we to walk in nearer fellowship with him. And seeing that all is of his grace, and mere sovereign love, pride is hid, every high thought is brought down, and the Lord Jesus alone gets all—it is his due—all the glory. This is my daily walk—a little sketch of it—but enough to let you see, that I have to do with nothing for the peace of my conscience, the happiness of my heart, the conformity of my tempers and walk to the will of God, but Jesus, his Father's love, and my Father's, witnessed by the word, and made mine by believing: the end of my walk is not to get, not to procure a title to, but to make good and to enjoy my title to, his love in Jesus. I learn and am learning to look at him—look unto Jesus. May you do it more than me, and then you will get on faster than me to heaven.

Dear friends, I have written till I am tired: but, upon reading it over, I like it, and set my seal to the truth of it. God the Spirit seal it upon your hearts!

I was to have written to Mr. T. I am vastly in his debt; but have no time. I do not, cannot forget his and Mrs. T.'s love to our Master and his cause. The Lord bless them both—and you both. So prays, &c.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXIX.

To Mrs. P.

BLACKFRIARS, *Feb.* 10, 1773.

MY VERY HON. FRIEND.—I thought myself greatly favoured by your long and kind letter. Many circumstances concurred to make me thank God and you for it. Your acknowledgments to me are over payment; especially as they prove that the great pains which the Lord had taken with you were not in vain. Indeed, I believe they were not. Your trial was sharp and long; very, very grievous to the flesh: and only he who bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up—only he could have carried you through it. His almighty grace supplied you with patience; suffering and bearing was then your exercise. Now this is over, profiting is your lesson: and it must be the same grace that produces the blessed fruits that grow upon the cross. Oh for a rich and plentiful harvest of them in your soul! I would set my wishes before you for the improvement of a recovery from sickness; not from dry precept, but from a winning example. It is not the worse for being ancient, but mellower and riper. I had it from the east, and set a great value upon the manuscript. The author is yet unknown. I have the original, both in Hebrew and Greek. If critics were to form learned conjectures, and to raise arguments from the style, they would very likely give it to John Chrysostom; because he was a sickly man, and it is so very much in his manner of writing. But, however, the sentiments are so agreeable to the canonical scriptures, that it has been put, although apocryphal, at the end of the Hebrews, and entitled the 14th chapter; because, I suppose, the noble army of sufferers, mentioned in the former chapters, were of this spirit, and made just such an improvement of sickness as is here described. For my own part, I can only say that it is perfectly agreeable to the views which I have of a believer rising from a sick bed; and such as I wish to find in experience, if ever I should be so tried. Upon reading it over just now, it warmed my heart, and drew tears of joy from mine eyes; for I am well persuaded, the dear Physician, life-giving Jesus, is exactly such as he is here described. Oh, Mrs. P., I can wish you nothing better than more acquaintance with your best friend. Do not, madam, pray do not, be shy of his company. He loves familiarity. Be free, be intimate with him: nothing can please him so much. Converse with him as you would with your own husband, and be assured he will tell you no lies. You may safely believe every word he says. You may venture your soul upon it; for it is all gospel. It is the truth of God, infallible, unchangeable. It is for want of knowing him that you now and then are tempted to think that he says more than he will make good. Oh, no. He is truth itself, and also the Lord God Almighty. Believe, only believe, and you will certainly find a performance of those things which have been spoken by the Lord, and by us his servants to you. You are within the reach of my prayers; and I would not wish to forget you in them: as long as you and I are upon praying ground, I would be ever making request for you. The inclosed was copied out for your perusal, with many supplications. God hear them for you, and make you what he would have you—that is, an humble, happy believer! My wife joins heartily in wishing you this and every other blessing together with your faithful servant in Jesus,

W. ROMAINE.

The 43d Chapter of Job, in the Apocrypha.

1. Thus you heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very full of pity, and of tender mercy.

2. He never afflicteth willingly: he has infallible wisdom to contrive, and the heart of a parent to send every chastisement to his children.

3. He well knows what sin wants purging; and there is a needs-must for strong physic.

4. He has seen where the fear of man got the better of the fear of God; and he takes his sharp rod, not in anger, but in love; not to punish, but to correct.

5. If the world creep into the heart of any of his children, he is very jealous, and will not be rivalled: he is guided by the tenderest affection when he embitters worldly joy, and by sickness makes that a pain in which his child foolishly sought happiness.

6. If he send great and heavy affliction, and it come in a way which makes it to the flesh the greatest and heaviest, yet he has his everlasting arms underneath, to support, even when little faith can scarce perceive them.

7. And he not only supports, but also often vouchsafes a gracious visit, breaks in with his sweet presence and sensible comfort to the heart, and the poor, sick, fainting child is made to say, "Oh let me suffer any thing, so I may but have such visits from my God! A sick bed with these cordials is heaven upon earth."

8. But the Lord's end is answered; he abates the sickness, and health returns: the Father throws away the rod as soon as the child has learned to kiss it, and to be thankful for it:

9. Then he makes it appear that he kept the rod so long for the child's good, in order to teach lessons which could not be learned in any other way.

10. He intended to make the child's will bow to his; and it does: Holy Father, thy will be done; thy will be suffered: I desire "to lie as clay in the hand of the potter."

11. He designed to produce many peaceful fruits of righteousness, which grow upon no tree but the cross; and therefore he continued the cross a long time, only to make the fruits richer and riper.

12. Hear the great crowd of witnesses. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. In love he chose us in his Son, and called us by his Spirit; in love he corrected us; in love he supported us under the correction; in love he removed it, the moment his gracious purpose was answered.

13. Oh may a sense of his goodness grow with health, and the soul prosper as the body does.

14. May every peaceful fruit flourish to the praise of the glory of our Father's exceeding rich grace.

15. May there be more faith in the great peace-maker, and more resignation to the Father's will in him; a mind more reconciled to the cross, and profiting more under it; a heart daily more dead to the world, and more engaged about and pleased with heavenly things; a conversation so well ordered as to maintain peace with God through life, and at last to die in the peace of Jesus that passeth all understanding.

Hebrews xiv. *Apocrypha.*

1. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name.

2. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits.

3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.

4. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.

5. I had reason to think, in my sickness, "I shall go to the gates of the grave. I am deprived of the residue of my years.

6. "I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living. I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

7. "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent. My beauty is turned in me into corruption, and I shall be cut off with pining sickness."

8. But when I cried unto the Lord, he heard my voice out of his holy temple: he delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling

9. My recovery was the Lord's doing—his, and his only—and it is indeed marvellous in mine eyes.

10. Oh how good is my God! What return shall I make unto him for this never to be forgotten mercy as well as for his other benefits, with which he loadeth me daily.

11. I have nothing to return him but what is his own, and nothing but what I wish may be his own: myself I give up and devote to the Lord of my life and health, wishing all I have and am may be his for ever.

12. O my God, and my Jesus, make me better for this affliction. Now thou hast raised me from a sick bed, let me recover in my soul as fast as I do in my body, and both prosper alike.

13. Let thy end, Lord, in this chastening, be answered; and let it yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness now I have been exercised thereby.

14. Since thou hast favoured me with sickness, how can I enough adore thy matchless love, which supported me under it, and brought me through it? Now, Lord, give me thy blessing on it.

15. How mightily should a review of thy gracious dealings with me encourage me to trust thee for the future! Oh grant me more steadily to believe the promises, and to rely on thy fulfilling them to me: Lord, increase my faith.

16. As thou hast shown me how uncertain every creature-comfort is—all are perishing—health, on which their enjoyment depends—life, on which they have their very being—Oh my God, raise my hopes above them, to the better comforts of a better world:

17. And there fix my poor wavering heart: set it free from its old sins, and from its favourite pursuits, that every affection may be henceforward where my treasure is, even where thou, my Jesus, art sitting at the right hand of God.

18. Oh for more of these graces, that my best friend, who has dealt so bountifully with me, may be every day of my life more beloved, and better served.

19. My dear Jesus, I want to be more dead to worldly hopes and fears, which have too much governed my heart, and influenced my conduct. Subdue in me these base-born passions; so that, for the future, my hopes may all centre in thy love, and I may fear nothing but the displeasing thee.

20. While thy mercies are fresh upon my mind, let me find growing zeal to thy lovely name and precious cause, that I may never be ashamed of thee before men.

21. Mine own will has been my plague. Oh, my Lord, subdue it, and make it bow to thine: let thy revealed will be my study, thy ways my delight; and let my whole life, so kindly lent me, be one continued sacrifice of praise.

23. If thou art pleased to lend me more time, help me, Jesus, to redeem it: if I have health, add to it a thankful heart. Whatever blessings thou givest, give me grace to receive them from thy bounty, and to use them to thy glory.

23. Whenever thou shalt be pleased to put me into the furnace (it may be soon), Lord, enable me to go into it with strong faith, and to stay in it thy time, with humble patience. Oh never let me want thy good Spirit! that through him, not in word only, but in deed and in truth, I may say, Thy will be done

24. Yet a very little, little time, and the days of my pilgrimage will be ended; and then I shall see thee face to face. Oh! what a sight will that be! My God and Saviour, let the faith of it warm my heart, and the hope of it influence my life, that, whenever thou callest, I may be ready, and may have nothing to do but to go up into the mount, and to die in the arms of Jesus. *Amen.*

LETTER CXX

London, *Feb.* 4, 1786.

Mr. S.—I was very thankful for your letter: it was a volunteer, and worth a hundred pressed men. It revived the pleasing remembrance of our K. visit, for which I have often thanked our common friend; especially because he made it an earnest of a much better meeting. The year 1786 has some pleasing presages

of that event. You know, new-year's-day is a great festival at our church. I used to have a Hebrew motto; but this was Greek: I am Alpha and Omega. As this is a standing dish for all our entertainments through the year, I will send you some of it, that you may feast with us, and give your dear wife some of the banquet; and perhaps the crums from the master's table may prove also very palatable to brother N. We are come together this morning to devote ourselves afresh to the service, and to begin the year, as we hope to end it, in the faith and fear of the Son of God; for he is our Alpha and Omega. And he is all between the beginning and the ending. He is the self-existent Jehovah, who was, and is, and will be, the first cause, and the last end, of all beings and things: for he is the Lord God Almighty; and as such we take him this new year to be our Immanuel, that we may live by him, and on him, every moment, and for every thing: for he is the God of nature—the God of grace—the God of providence—the God of glory. First, He is the Creator of all worlds, Psalm cii. 25, 26, 27, explained; Heb. i. 10; as also Cor. i. 16, 17. He has the same essence, the same attributes with the Father, Isaiah xliv. 6, 7, 8; and, by taking our nature, God and man in one Christ. He has every perfection to fit him to be, secondly, the God of grace; a proper surety to act for us, by completing all his covenant engagements with the Father; and having, by his most holy life, wrought out our righteousness, and, by his infinitely precious death, made a full and perfect satisfaction for sin, he is the Almighty giver of all his grace. He has it all in his fulness: a prophet to teach the ignorant; a priest to pardon the guilty: a king to govern the helpless: and, sitting on a throne of grace, he is able to bless the miserable even with all spiritual, yea, and with all eternal blessings. May he be more glorified this year than ever! He is the God of all grace, and we ought to grow in grace, by our settled dependence upon him for the concerns of this life, as well as for a better. It is our privilege, and we should find it our happiness, after we have trusted our souls in his hands, to trust our bodies, and all that belongs to them, in his hands also: for he is, thirdly, the God of providence. He has the ordering and directing of every person and every event. Not a sparrow falls without his notice. Not a hair of our heads, but he numbers them. He interests himself in the very least as well as the greatest concerns of his people. And on this account, believers should exercise their faith in every action of life, and they would find that, by trusting in him for all things, they would have a spiritual use of, and profit from, temporal things. I have left my all to the care and providence of my Almighty friend: he will manage for me better than I could for myself. My health, my circumstances, my family, children, and servants are all under his government. I may therefore trust, and not be afraid. He is Almighty to fulfil his offices, and all his promises. Almighty to protect his from all enemies, miseries, sin, Satan, death, and hell. And, come what will, he is Almighty to make all things produce good, as he said, Gen. xv. 1. My dear brother, you know something of this blessed life; but there is more than you have yet learned. Let Mrs. S. bring her case, and leave it with the Lord: all will be well—only, trust. Pray for more trust: for, as faith increases, it will open to you most blessed views of an Omega, who is, fourthly, the God of glory. He gives it: for he is the author of eternal salvation. Read John xvii.; mind what he there prays for; and he has all power in heaven and earth to bestow it. The whole company around the throne are ascribing to him all their glory, as you see, Rev. v. 9, to the end. I join them. So do you. Thanks be to him for his unspeakable grace. Through the year, trust our Alpha and Omega. Begin and end with him. Preach him. Live him. Let him be your companion at K.; your friend at W.; your God through life and death. Mrs. S. has my prayers: I know her wants; and I will recommend her to the King: he will be her help in every time of need. I often mention your children; and he has been their keeper hitherto. Now remember me: I am in want of a curate. The great head of the church will send me one of his ordaining. I wait for such a one. Mrs. Romaine joins me in the best wishes to Mrs. S. I charge you never to forget, in your best moments, your real friend and brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXI.

MANY, many thanks to Mr. and to Mrs. T. for their remembrance of us this year. I am ashamed I have not acknowledged your favour sooner; but truly, sir, I grow very lazy and good for nothing. It is high time I was turned out of the vineyard, and any other master but mine would have had nothing to do with me long ago. I loathe myself, and stand wondering daily at his kindness. Never was self lower, and his loveliness higher, than in this new year. Though we are but just entered on it, yet he has already vouchsafed us some delightful Pisgah views. It has been for many years a custom with me to have a text, a sort of a watch-word, something very short, easy to be remembered, and which may serve the believer to feast upon for a twelvemonth. I have found this very useful to myself; and so have others. Our text for this year, 1772, was "Christ is all:" he has all the fulness of salvation in him, as God-man; and he has it to the glory of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, as the head for the use of his members; and it pleased the Holy Spirit to testify of his fulness in the scripture; and it pleases him, by his grace, to bring believers to use it, and to live upon it. This is the true saving work of grace. All other experience is not worth a farthing The Holy Ghost comes to pull down self and to exalt Christ; and this he does effectually. He enlightens the understanding, and convinces it that Christ is the one Sun of the spiritual world. He sends his scholars to Christ, and to none but Christ, to be taught the things of God. He brings them humbled to the Saviour's feet, where they sit to hear his words. Thus he glorifies their divine prophet: and in the matter of teaching he makes Christ all. The Bible, and ministers, and means, are only to lead to Christ, that out of his fulness they may receive lesson upon lesson, line upon line.

Methinks I hear Mrs. T. ask, But how shall I know that I am one of Christ's scholars, and that he is my teacher? My dear friend, you are to know it from what you have learned. You cannot be certain of it any other way: and he would have you to look at his truth, and to try yourself by it. When you think of your fallen state, in which you inherit a corrupt nature, and can in it do nothing but sin; when guilt is in your conscience, and fear in your heart; what is it that brings you any relief? to what do you look for pardon? and from whence do you expect peace with God? Your answer will show that the Lord God our prophet has been teaching you.

Methinks I hear you reply (for I have heard you say it), Why, to be sure, I have no hope but in that sacrifice of the Lamb of God which perfecteth for ever, and in that righteousness of his which justifieth from all things. This is the true object of salvation. This, and nothing else. Christ is all. There is no pardon but in his blood; no justification but in his obedience; no heaven but what is the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ is all.

Thus far all is well. But the comfort of this, the comfort to know it, is mine. There Mrs. T. has her objection ready. My dear madam, show me the text which says, "He that is comforted shall be saved"—or, that faith consists in knowing that salvation is mine. You are called upon to trust the work of Christ, and to trust for yourself upon the free warrant of God's faithful word. Rest here, giving credit to God's promise of salvation to all that will receive it, and, I will lay my life of it, you will never want comforting, and soon be satisfied you are a saved sinner. If you rest not here, get comfort, it will not be true nor lasting; and your application to yourself will be only the act of your own mind, and will prove as changeable as the wind.

But you would not have me to go on in a dark uncomfortable way, not knowing whither I am going. No, Mrs. T.: I want to lead you to light and comfort in the direct road. Christ is the way: look more at him, and less at yourself: trust more to him, and less to your faith. Be always thinking of your emptiness, and of his fulness. Meditate on him; pray to him. You cannot be thus employed about the Sun without being enlightened by his rays and cherished

with his warm beams. When people are very cold within doors, and see the sun shining sweetly, they do not ask, Is it my sun? May I go out and walk in this noon-day brightness, and get myself warm with this delightful sunshine? Is it for me? Yes: for you. Whoever will, may take Christ for their pardon, Christ for their righteousness, Christ for heaven, and for all they want till they come there. You are willing; therefore Christ, and all he has, is yours. Now, Mrs. T., what do you say to this? Why, say you, To be sure, I do build upon this foundation; but I still lack many things. Very well; I am glad you do; the more the better. Whatever you lack, it is in Christ's fulness, and he has it for you: so that here will be a blessed intercourse between you and Christ, and a holy friendship, in giving and receiving. Every moment you want something: Christ says, here it is; come to me for it; I can deny you nothing; be it for temporals, Psalm xxxiv. 10, or for spirituals, Eph. i. 3, or for eternals, Rom. vi. 23: all is yours. This is living by the faith of the Son of God; and it is the best way to live: for you cannot be thus receiving every moment out of Christ's fulness but you must experience that he is yours; which will make your faith practical and certain. You will then have done disputing about your interest in Christ. While you are making use of him, you can no more question his being yours than you can whether the meat is yours which you have been eating to-day.

Thus, you see, Christ is All in time, and All in eternity. May he have his honour in little H. Do but trust him, and you will see what miracles he will do for you. My wife joins me in this advice.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXII.

April 17, 1764.

Dear Madam.—I have you in remembrance before the throne of grace, thanking God for his unspeakable gift to you, praying you may increase still and abound in the knowledge of those things which are freely given to you of God; among which, Christ is the chiefest: for with him the Father gives his children all things, and they know it to their comfort, when by faith they are enabled to believe him for their perfect Saviour, and to live upon his fulness for every grace and blessing. Taught by his word, and guided by his Spirit, they have but one object to look unto, even Jesus, and but one way to get any thing from him, and that is by faith, which, having first evidenced to the soul its union with Christ, afterwards improves it by constant communion with him. What little, by the good hand of God upon me, I have learned of this blessed subject, I have laid before the public. My single design in living, in preaching, in writing, is to exalt and glorify our divine Saviour; and in this I would have none above me. I desire to give him the pre-eminence in all things; for not one upon earth is more indebted to him than I am. When I think of what I owe him, the immense debt makes him exceedingly dear and precious. I would not have it a farthing less; because then I should want a motive to exalt his blood and righteousness. I would not be without one want which I now have; because it is his very crown and glory to supply, and will be, all the needs of his people. Just as I am, ignorant, sinful, and helpless, he is most exactly suited to my case; and therefore my heart most sweetly enjoys and rejoices in his finished salvation. I have much forgiven, and therefore love him much. Dear friend, I have often found you happy in your own soul by building all upon Jesus, that sure foundation. Hold fast there, and leave all nice distinctions and curious points to others: the true solid matter is plain enough. In Jesus there is free, and full, and eternal salvation; and it is all yours by believing.

Look unto him, and you shall be saved. This is the truth, which, if the Lord please, he can make my little * book, the means of establishing you in. I most

* Life of Faith.

heartily wish it, and beg of Jesus to bless you as much in reading as he did me in writing it. May the wisdom of Jesus guide, and the arm of Jesus strengthen, you in every good work, and be with you in every one of his gracious offices, and make you quite happy in himself. I am, truly for his sake, your friend,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXXIII.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. Romaine.

"YOU may depend upon this as one of the sweetest axioms in divinity:—Whatever it is which makes you pleased with yourself, is not true grace; and whatever makes you displeased with yourself, is not true grace, unless it brings you humbly to Christ, and makes you put more trust and confidence in him. The good Lord teach you these things practically. I have learned them by long experience, though I know but little of them; yet, I am getting on in the school of Christ, and hope soon to be on the lowest form, for there we learn most, and fastest. We there depend entirely on the teachings of our divine Master, who reveals the secrets of his kingdom to none but babes. As a new-born babe depends entirely on the care of its parents, so must we on God our prophet and teacher: and when we are brought thus humble, he will make known to us what he hideth from the wise and prudent. I would therefore wish you to be the humblest man upon earth, not only that you might know most, but also that you might love most. He that feels his sins and miseries, his vileness and unprofitableness, with the deepest loathings of them, is in the fittest way to love Christ. If he be an experienced believer, the feelings of those sins, miseries, &c. will make Christ more precious: the more he finds of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, he will trust the more in Christ. The more misery he knows he deserves, salvation from it will make Jesus more dear and lovely. His vileness sets forth Christ's grace: his unworthiness, the worthiness of the Lamb: his unprofitableness, the sufficiency of Jesus, who is all in all.

When you are going to measure Christ's high grace, do not get upon a mountain, but go down into a valley; lower still, to the depth from which David cried; lower still, to the belly of hell, from which Jonah cried; and from thence take the heights of Jesus' grace; and from thence see how lovely he is. When the Spirit of Jesus is humbling you, showing you your deceitful wicked heart, laying open your ruined nature in all its abominable workings, has not this often discouraged you, my friend? Instead of trusting Christ, and loving Christ more, did it not weaken your faith, and so lessen your love, and thereby counteract the gracious purposes of Jesus' Spirit? May he teach you better; that every future sense of sin may greatly endear to you the Lamb of God, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Depend upon it, that only is the true humbling for sin that makes his blood more precious."

LETTER CXXIV.

LAMBETH, *Dec.* 3, 1767.

DEAR SIR.—Mr. F. informed me of your commission to buy the Law and Gospel. I make you a present of the Life of Faith. I have also sent you a book of inestimable value, which I was inclined to do, because it affords me an opportunity to introduce myself to you, and give you a word of advice on your going into orders. It is a great undertaking, and I will speak freely to you upon it, as, were I in your circumstances, I should have wished some one would have dealt with me. The Lord God make it a blessing to you.

First, I would have you, sir, to consider one qualification for the ministry indispensably necessary, and that is, the knowledge of yourself; you cannot teach

this till you have been taught, nor farther than you have been taught it. Consider what is your state. Is not sin, misery, helplessness, your condition in Adam? Are not you by nature a child of wrath? Mr. M., do you know this? Have you ever felt the plague of your heart? Have you ever seen the legion of lusts within you—every one of them ready to take up arms and rebel against God? Are you sensible how often they have drawn you into actual rebellion? And do you know what will be the end of this state without a Saviour? Think, sir: how can you preach these things if you have never felt them? Oh beg of God, then, to make you sensible how much you want a Saviour, that you may know how to address yourself to others upon the same subject.

Secondly, Another indispensable qualification is the knowledge of Christ—to know his person—God-man—his work, in his life and death, as our whole salvation, made ours whenever his Spirit enables us to receive it, and enjoyed as ours so far as by faith we dare believe in him. This is the doctrine to be preached. How can a man preach it who does not know it, or who does not believe it? Try yourself here, Mr. M. Is he, in whose name, and to preach whom, you are ordained—is he true and very God—the self-existent Jehovah? Is there salvation in none other person or thing? God help you not to be deceived in that most essential doctrine!

A third thing is absolutely necessary; namely, the knowledge of God's word. I send you this little blessed book, in reading which you will learn yourself. Here is your true picture; and here is the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. In reading and hearing the scriptures, the Spirit sets in with the word, and shows the sinner himself, and then shows him the Saviour, and enables him to believe unto salvation. All the teaching of God's Spirit is in and by the word: he accompanies nothing but his own truth with his own blessing; and that he does so bless, that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Are these things so? Is the Bible the word of God? Does it make the believer wise unto salvation? Is it profitable for doctrine, for reproof, &c. Oh! Sir, what are you doing, that other books are so much read, and the Bible so neglected? Will you learn from a poor penitent? Indeed I repent, and God forgive my mis-spent time in sciences and classics. I saw my folly two and twenty years ago, and have since studied nothing but the Bible; and I assure you, sir, I am got but a little way. I see such things before me, which I know but in part, that I am pressing on; and I wish for some of my lost time to spend in this blessed study. Take warning. Prize my little present: read it over and over: it is valuable as coming from my heart's love; but infinitely more so as the copy of Christ's love. You cannot read it too much: wear it out in reading; and I promise you a much neater and finer edition: but the finest is that which the Spirit writes upon the heart. Oh that he may write a very fair copy upon yours!

Fourthly, Your next thing is to know your office. To what are you ordained? If you know not yourself, and know not Jesus, nor his word, how can you possibly discharge your office? In these things the chief part of it consists. A minister, unacquainted with himself, can never show his people what they are in themselves. What can he say of Christ, who is not acquainted with him? Or how can he preach the word, who never studied it, or who never had his understanding opened to understand the scriptures? Think of these things, sir, and meditate much upon them. Weigh well your office; examine well your call to it. Are you enabled faithfully to declare the whole counsel of God: with boldness to tell sinners their guilt and danger, which will make all the unconverted your bitter enemies—with clearness to set forth the way of salvation, through our surety, God-Jesus—with evidence to show the work of the Spirit in convincing of sin; in working faith in Jesus' word; to rely upon his blood and righteousness; and enabling the believer to live upon the fulness of Jesus' grace, receiving out of it grace for grace every moment, for all the purposes of spiritual life? And that you may do this successfully, in spite of all opposition, are you made willing to practise what you are to preach? That is the best sermon which the minister preaches all the week. Nothing is so powerful as example. Blessed is he who lives, out of the pulpit, what he says in it, and knows his doctrine to be truly experience: so may it be with you. I had a great deal more to say to you upon

your success in your office, or on your discouragements, &c.; but Mr. B., who sits by me, is in a hurry, and I can add no more, being forced to scribble what I have written. What I leave out in my letter, I will put into my prayers for you —for your going into orders—and for your being fitted for the work of the ministry—and for your saving your own soul, as well as theirs who hear you. Remember me in your prayers. I very heartily wish you well in the Lord; being in him, and for his sake, yours, very sincerely,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXXV.

To Mrs. C.

Dec. 17, 1778.

MADAM.—I herewith send you the Bible of which I was speaking to you—a book of inestimable value, containing the great charter of grace, by which the Lord God has granted you, under his hand and seal, a full discharge from sin and misery, and a full title to life eternal. These blessings he has given to you in his Son; and therefore the record of God, concerning his Son, is the chief subject of the book. What he is in his person as God-man—what he has done —what he has suffered—his complete Redemption—his prevailing intercession—are largely treated of. And, because we cannot understand these things, nor believe them, nor make use of them of ourselves; therefore the Spirit who inspired the book still accompanies the hearing of it, and renders it the means of knowing Jesus, of believing in Him, and of enjoying the Father's love in Him. Would you grow in this knowledge, in this faith, in this love, here is the ordinance of God. His Almighty power is still in the word. Here read, meditate, pray over it, and you will find it able to make you wise unto salvation; and that is as wise as you need be. 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

It is my privilege to be any ways useful to you in this most noble design: and whatever prayer can do (and what cannot the prayer of faith do?) I shall not cease to use for you, imploring the teaching of the Spirit upon all your hearing and reading the word of God. May you find it profitable, every day more profitable, for those gracious purposes for which it was revealed. Yet a very little while, and it shall be perfectly fulfilled, and more than you conceive fulfilled in your everlasting glory. In the bonds of Christian love, I am yours heartily,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXXVI.

To Mrs. D.

Aug. 17, 1777.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—I write unto you because I hear you are still very poorly in your health, and I am desirous you should improve this providence. You are kept low for very good reasons. He who gave his Son for you, and his Spirit to enable you to receive him by faith, has your best interest in view, and never loses sight of it. Could you look into his loving heart, as it is opened in the scriptures, you would see the tenderest mercy in all your sufferings: yea, you would believe and rejoice under them. I know you often want this blessed view of your heavenly Father, and therefore, I will send you a looking-glass, which will always set him before you in the same most amiable light. In his Son, he is altogether lovely—love itself—an infinite ocean of everlasting love—a heavenly Father to all who come to him through Jesus and are led to acknowledge his perfections as they shine forth in their fullest glory in Immanuel. The word reports

this. Faith receives it. Faith looks to the person of Christ, the incarnate Jehovah—looks and loves. Faith builds all its hopes upon his wonderful work, trusting to that offering which alone perfects for ever, and to that obedience which alone brings in everlasting righteousness, and to that intercession from which alone we obtain all needful grace and all possible glory: and thus, whosoever believeth is saved freely by grace, through faith.

I know your mind well. You are thinking, This is true: but is Jesus mine? Yes, Mrs. D.; certainly he is yours; not only by free gift, but also by evident application. Has not the Spirit of Jesus quickened you? Have not you received the truth through his teaching, and believed it? I appeal to yourself for what God has done in you, many years ago. You have been brought to know yourself. You do feel what a poor creature you are. You have been enabled to see what a complete Saviour Jesus is; and you are wishing daily to believe more in him: you are grieved to the heart that you love him so little. These are, with me, certain marks of the work of God. Oh do not dishonour his word and work. Set to your seal, without wavering, that God is true; and wait the event: be assured not a tittle of what he hath spoken shall fail. Read Luke i. 45.

In your weak state of body, and frequent complaints, here is your only medicine. If rightly used, it will keep up your spirits, and will prove a continual cordial. God is yours: he has given you an undoubted warrant to call him your Father in Jesus. His love to you is like himself—unchangeable. He loved you in his Son before time, yea from everlasting. Of this he would convince you, by his dealings with you, as well as by his promises to you. There is the same ground for both, and may you believe both alike! He has given you faith: and he would have you to be satisfied it is sterling, true faith, of his own operation. How is he to do this? Why, in infinite love he puts faith to the trial. He keeps you low in body: this is the furnace in which your gold is to be found genuine. He tries your faith, not for his own sake, but for yours. He tells you his design, Zech. xiii., last verse. He sits as a refiner over the process. The furnace shall not be a bit too hot. The gold shall not lose an atom: but the believer shall call upon the Lord in the fire, and he shall say,—"Thou art one of my people," and each shall say, "The Lord is our God."

Happy trial! You shall not only know your faith real, but it shall be refined. The furnace shall evidence the power, as well as the truth of it. The trial is to prove this. It is to bring you experience of God's arm being your support. For in the trial, faith renounces its own strength, that the Lord's strength may be perfected in its weakness. Genuine faith is altogether self-denial. And how can you learn this but when your own strength is totally given up, and you are then made to feel that the Lord's own arms are underneath you. And is not this a mercy? What greater, than to give you faith, and then to bring you to find that it stands in the power of God. I pray much for this improvement of your present poor state of health. If the Lord please to settle your heart in believing, so that you clearly see the truth of your faith, and come to feel the power of faith; then you will find a harvest of blessings from your faith. You may gather them up one by one, in the various promises made to the afflicted believer. Chiefly let me recommend two:—Rom. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; 1 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8. These are what your heavenly Father intends to bestow. The cross is big with them. He wants to do his child good, and therefore makes way for his favours in the soul by removing outward favours. May the master teach you himself, and make up in your heart my pious wishes for you.

If you are tolerably well, and at leisure, we would come down and see you next week. If you are at leisure, I must tell you, we come three. William is now my pupil; and I cannot spare him from me.

Mr. D. must apply what I say of your weakness to his rheumatism, and it will do him as much good. Pray for us, as we do for you. I am, with Mrs. R. and son, yours, in bonds not to be broken,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXVII.

Letters to W. T. Esq.

Oct. 10, 1781.

My dear Mr.——. Through the good hand of my God, being returned safe to my house and charge, I cannot sit down without thanking him and you. My Southampton mercies were great and many. The very hospitable reception which I found at Mr. ——'s deserves to be acknowledged; and I take up my pen to own it with gratitude. I have been flattering myself, there was something more in your kindness to us than mere friendship. It is said, "that we are taught of God to love one another." Hospitality becomes a divine grace when we love men for God's sake: for it is then the fruit of our union with Christ, and, being united by one Spirit under one head, we live as members, and love as brethren, wishing and promoting each other's happiness. This is a very pleasing thought, as every thing is, that endears Christ; and it has added much to the favours received at Southampton. They are magnified greatly by being viewed, as the effect of Christ's love to you, and as manifesting to me your love to him: because this is a stream from the ocean of his grace, and will not stop till it run into it again. And I thank God on my part, although I was a receiver, yet I found, all the time I was under your roof, what the *Communion of Saints* means. For I practised it, paying you in my way. You got spirituals for temporals. You have, and justly, gained an interest in my prayers, more than you had. And, I hope, whenever I am in his company who does not forget a cup of cold water given in his name, I shall not forget to recommend to him Mr. ——, his wife, and family. Do the same by me and mine: and get out of my debt as fast as you can. Mrs. Romaine is not behindhand in thanks to Mrs. T. She spent no such time this summer as those six days at Southampton. You may give her credit that her professions are sincere, and that she is truly sensible of your kindness. If we live till the primroses adorn the earth in the next spring, you may expect to hear more from me, and perhaps I may come and tell you some more good news. But this is in God's hand. And it is too far off to promise any thing, especially for me, who have not an hour I can call my own.

My blessing on your children; and the favour of heaven on all your connexions My brotherly love to Mr. ——: much success to him in public and private, in preaching and teaching. If he would take my advice, it would be better to lay aside those meetings which provoke disputations. The self-righteous spirit of Arminianism is fond of wrangling and altercation. Prayer will do more good in opposing it than a thousand arguments. And when the cause is removed in God's way and time, things may return to their old establishment. In the mean season a prayer meeting seems to be the best and most seasonable meeting. I am, very sincerely, in our common Lord, your obliged friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXVIII.

Feb. 20, 1784.

My very dear Friend.—You made up by its rich contents, when it came, for the long time your letter was in coming. I am much beholden to you for its companions,—both tasting of brotherly love, which completes the banquet; thanks be to God and to you. Be not offended that I put him first; because I owe to him the knowledge of you, the love of you, and from him proceeds all intercourse of love between us. While we keep him in sight in our friendship, it will be a mutual blessing. For this I am praying; and, you know, our God is famous for hearing and for answering prayer. Indeed, what he hears and answers is first his own; for he gives us the spirit of prayer; we know not of ourselves what to ask; and when we do know, we cannot ask aright; but he

enables us to feel our wants, to ask a supply of them in faith, and he helps our infirmities in asking: when we have done our best, he teaches us to present our petitions for acceptance into the hands of our great Mediator. As they come from us, they are nothing worth; but when Christ makes them his prayers, then they go up with much incense, and come down with abundant blessings. Was it not so, the morning you were at prayer? You wanted a family Bible. It was only ask and have. Here it is—God's gift. And mind, you may have any thing of him as cheap as this: for he giveth liberally to all askers. I wish you may be as humble an asker as he is a liberal giver. I have complied with your request in writing your name and mine in the Bible—in which, also, you desired me "to write some directions how to read it." This I have not done; because the subject of prayer is the whole Bible. All the volume is to be prayed over as you read it; and then I must have transcribed it. But though I cannot, need not, do this, yet I will lay open my heart unto you, and will let you into my own practice. Something like this is my constant prayer; and, as far as you believe, it will be yours. May you use it with more faith than I ever did.

Oh thou spirit of wisdom and revelation, be with me, whenever I read thy holy word: testify to me in it, and by it, of Christ Jesus, who he is, and what he is to me; and glorify the Father's love in him. Open thou mine eyes to see the wondrous things revealed in it upon these subjects, that I may understand them in thy light, and that my judgment of them may be the same with thine: I beseech thee also to enable me to mix faith with what I do understand; and what, through thy teaching, I am enabled to believe aright, that help me to receive in the love of the truth. Oh God, fulfil thy promise: put thy blessed word into my inward parts: write it upon my heart. And what I am taught to love, grant me power to practise; that thy new covenant promise may in me have its full effect, and I may be in heart and life cast into the mould and form of thy word—thus becoming a real living edition of the Bible. Make it my daily study. Render it my constant delight. Let my meditation of it be always sweet. Oh thou holy and eternal Spirit, witness thus to thine own record; and let me experience it to be the power of God, as well as the truth of God. In this dependence upon thee in the use of it, let me be daily growing until, by the will of God, I shall have served mine own generation; and then let it be the last act of my life, to seal the truth of thy testimony concerning Jesus. Let me find thy witness true in the hour of death, and beyond death all the promises made good to me, through Jesus Christ, in life everlasting. *Amen* and *Amen.*

This is the substance of my prayers. I never confine myself to these very words. They are not a form, but a directory: and I think they contain every thing which you and I are warranted to ask of God, concerning the profit which he has promised to them who mix faith with his word.

For this profit on the family Bible I have prayed. It is a consecrated book. May you ever find it all I wish to you. And may the Almighty Spirit speak by it as often as it is read to children, and servants, and strangers. Whenever it is put into my hands, may I always use it with the prayer of faith. It is now my stay: "I know in whom I have believed." My heart is at rest about the event. All besides is disquieting. Look at the state of the church. Survey the kingdom. Examine parties. What profitable good can come from any of them. See the evil within you. Feel it. And then tell me whether there be any certain prospect of solid happiness but what is promised and found in our Shiloh, the giver of quietness. May he continue to bless you.

W. Romaine

LETTER CXXIX.

March 19, 1784.

My dear Friend.—I have read of a certain love-charm, which has pleased me ever since I heard of it—"If you would be beloved—love."

It was the saying of an old philosopher: I admire it, and I set my seal to it. *Probatum est:* for it is true gospel. It is the very way in which God commendeth his love to us, and which is the means of teaching us to love one another. I have in my heart brotherly love: and what is it worth if it does not prevent the very wishes of my friends, and by trying to do them good, even when they are asleep, or when they know nothing of it? Mr. ——, I tell you nothing but the truth, that I am often thinking of you and yours, and am contriving every possible way of showing my affection, wherever I have interest, especially with my King, and with such of his royal gifts as you may never hear of in this world. Present things are only the evidence; and I cannot help giving you some proof of my good wishes.

Your consecrated Bible is in your hand every day. May he of whom it treats be ever with you in reading it. May he open it to you, as he did to his apostles, and give you to mix faith with it. We have got a great way into the study of it when we feel our need of David's prayer, and are constantly using it—"Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things in thy word:"—especially see, admire, and adore the wondrous love of God our Saviour. May he grow every day more dear and precious unto your heart.

You seem at a loss about the present system of politics. I am not so at all. Leaders of parties differ not an atom. Two men of the world think, speak, act on motives of self-interest. Potsherds of the earth, in their contest, may knock one against each other, and break both to pieces. Truly, sir, they will not, they cannot do you, or me, or our cause, any good, nor indeed hurt, unless we trouble ourselves about them. Our Lord reigneth. This is my first principle in politics: the next is, the same Lord reigneth: and so on, even to the end. The last is, the Lord reigneth. Blessings on him, King of kings, and Lord of lords! My King and my Lord. Here my heart rests, and is happy, come what may. He ruleth the raging of the sea. He ruleth the madness of the people. All things, creatures, devils, are in his power; and he makes them work under him for my good, and for his own glory. To his charge and care I commit you and yours; Mrs. —— especially. I pray that my dearest Jesus may be very near her heart, and comfort her spirit with his divine cordials.

Mr. W. T. shall not escape out of my hands, as he intends. Give my love to him, and tell him we will make one more effort at the Hebrew. Who knows what study and prayer may do?

I wish to eye and follow the blessed pattern of all perfection. To him I am infinitely indebted. "He has made me rich by making me a beggar. So wonderful is his love, that the poorer I am, the more he gives." And you, and I, and all my friends, are better for his gifts: he makes me loving, communicative, benevolent, beneficent, yea, whatever is counted moral. Oh, Mr. ——, I wish you perfectly acquainted with my Jesus. I know a little of him, and it is a blessed knowledge. Believe me, it is something of paradise. Read the word; there is his character: pray over it; there you will meet his Spirit: live on it by faith; there you will have graces and comforts: and go on; your time is short: improve it all you can. Grow ever so fast, and much, in the knowledge of Jesus, yet still there are worlds of science and experience before you. May you grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God-Jesus. As you do, I am sure he will put it into your heart to pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXXX.

July 30, 1784.

MY REAL FRIEND.—I have many subjects of thanks this morning. When I look at you, your wife, your children—your temporal blessings, how many, how great; your spiritual blessings, how exceeding great, passing all understanding, in their sovereign rise and fountain, in their reaching to your conscience and

heart and life, in their streams of grace; and how soon they will run, and you with them, into the ocean of eternity—I cannot help adoring and praising your most generous benefactor. Blessed be the Lord God for his unspeakable mercies to you. Indeed, my friend, he has loaded you with benefits, which are constantly calling on you to give him the glory due unto his name. Your skill in your business, your success in it, are the gifts of God. Prosper ever so much in it; build as fine a house as in H—e; live to see all your children grown up, settled, and prospering in the world; none of these things will be any hurt to you while you live in an abiding sense that God is a freegiver; nay, they will do you good while you see his hand and taste his love in them. I admire that sentence, "I have set the Lord always before me." Oh how much is it my daily prayer for you. In the morning, I scarce ever drink a dish of tea, but the cracknel, standing on the table, reminds me of my S. friends, and gets a petition put up to my royal Master. May he who gives me, through them, the bread that perisheth, give unto them daily the bread that endureth unto everlasting life. He himself is that bread. And I want you, in your heart, to feed upon him, feast upon him, I should say; and you are doing it, if he give you for the moment to feel your dependence, and bestow an atom more of thankfulness upon you. Oh that I could bring Jesus Christ and you as near together as he wishes you. He is not shy nor reserved. He knows not what it is to keep state and distance.

Your sins and your complaints, rightly managed, would endear you to him; and your miseries, felt or feared, would make him more precious. He has warranted you to live with him in such intimacy, that every thing should set him before your eyes, and keep your heart warm with his heavenly love. He would have nothing to hinder. If good come, he is the giver: if bad come, he can, and he only can, make it work for good. This is the happy life, which you do know something of, as well as I; but truly, sir, I am but a learner, and a dull one: yet I have learned so much as to be convinced there is nothing upon earth to be compared with it. May your experience get far beyond mine. I will help you as I can, and follow you with my constant prayers. See how one wanders from the point, and gets upon what is uppermost. I took my pen to thank you for cracknels, and, lo, I have digressed to my old subject. Excuse me, sir; for in truth, I would give the whole world, if it were mine, to obtain for you a little more faith in the word, and a little more attachment to the person of my beloved Jesus. I thank him for the account of your family. I rejoice in your welfare. It is really mine own. Brotherly love makes it so. Blessed be God for his mercies to Mrs. ——. I thought my request was so reasonable, she would have gratified me. I did not wish a letter from her, but only an acknowledgment of my kindness in one line. I think, in my last, I dictated the words; but I lay no stress upon that. Leave me out; and thank God. I am praying for little John—God bless him. It will do me good, as I truly am his friend, to hear particularly of his welfare. I hope to take him up in my arms and bless him. You wish to know my route: we go north, God willing, next Monday, as far as Newcastle-upon-Tyne. I have three sisters living, and am going to take my final leave of them. They are old; so am I: and we shall not, in all probability, meet any more on this side of the grave.

The occasion of this journey has brought a great solemnity upon my spirits. There is something in this last meeting which would be too much for my feelings if I had not all the reasons in the world to believe that our next meeting will be in glory. Mr. Whitfield used often to say to me, "how highly favoured I was, that whereas, none of his family were believers, all mine were like those blessed people Jesus loved—Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." My father and mother, and my three sisters, share in his love. Glory be to him in the highest. My intention is to return about the middle of September. After some little stay at home, to go to my son's, at Reading, from thence to Heckfield, and so on to you at S.

I hope to find a letter on my table at my coming home, saying, Our house, our hearts are open: come and visit us in the name of the Lord. I have a proposal to brother K. Lately, I preached about a dozen sermons on Phil. iii. I

treated it as a body of divinity, doctrinal and practical. Let him try to see my plan;—if not, I will open it to him, as God shall help me. It is a wonderful portion of God's word · I admire it; I bless God for it. I could not do without it. Till Sept. 15, I take my leave. Let there be a letter then on my table, and you shall hear from me. Mrs. R. is not behind in best wishes to you and Mrs. ——. My blessing on all the children. Love to brother K., wife and family, and connexions. Pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXXXI.

MR. W. T. is come at last. By him I send my love, real, hearty, and what have just now been expressing to God for you and yours, especially for Mrs. ——, whose chaplain I am till she is abroad again.

It is now my preaching morning; and I am preparing for the delightful work: yet, I cannot help writing a line or two. My thoughts are turned to-day upon recommending Christ to my people. I have a sweet subject from John iv. 10; in which our Lord lays open the love of his heart in a most attracting manner. He must needs go through Samaria, because there was a very wicked creature, whom he would save. His manner of teaching her is peculiar to himself. He does it in the kindest way that almighty love could inspire—and I can witness for him that he is not changed—in convincing her, opening her eyes, making himself known, and giving her to believe in him: he is repeating these wonders every day, if thou knewest the gift of God. It is ignorance that keeps sinners from Christ. When he is teaching and drawing them, it is ignorant pride that hinders them from receiving salvation as the gift of God: it is for want of knowing who Christ is, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink. If his true character were understood—who he is, and what he came into the world for—convinced sinners would not lie under guilt and unbelief as they do. They would come and ask of him (for he gives to all askers) his spirit; which is the water of life. So the promise runs, Luke xi. 13: "Ask, and ye shall have," is the one grand truth that runs through the gospel. And, especially, the receiving, not for, but upon asking, the Holy Spirit, as John vii. 37, &c. He is the water mentioned John iv. 10; not living, as our translation hath it, but the water of life, as the old translations, or quickening water, as the French hath it, in verse 14. It shall be in him a fountain, not a well, springing up into everlasting life. Lord, give us this water of life! I sat down to write as soon as prayers were over, and Mr. W. and Mrs. R. went to breakfast. The bell rings to take away. W. is going. The Lord Jesus Christ bless you and yours, brother K. and family, and school. Excuse the little sermon. My mind was so taken up with it, that I could think of nothing else. Oh how often, how much, do I wish and pray that Christ and you were better acquainted. My dear friend, give him more employment; make more use of him; trust him better: he wants your confidence, and would have you live in perfect friendship with him. He deserves it at your hands. Indeed, sir, he would have you trust, and not be afraid. You cannot think what a heaven it is to be intimate with him. W. does not take his hat: so I write on, and so I will.

> Jesu, on thine each syllable
> A thousand sweet Arabias dwell;
> Mountains of myrrh, and beds of spices;
> And ten, ten thousand Paradises.

Ay, more than all this—millions more.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXXXII.

Sept. 15, 1784.

My very dear Friend.—Your letter met us returned in safety. We went out in his name, and came back to give him praise: for we set our seal to the promise, "I will keep thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore." And it was done unto us according to that word, wherein he had caused us to put our trust. In this same faith we hope to set out next week for Reading, not doubting but that in believing the truth of the promise, and relying on the promiser's faithfulness, we shall have the promised blessing, accompanying us as far as ——. The day we cannot fix; but we will take care to let you know it as soon as we know it ourselves. I have just finished my delightful task, and read through my Bible once more: the impressions which it has left on my heart, in this last perusal, are so warm and lively, that I cannot help communicating them to you, and wishing that you and Mrs. —— may feel the same.

The scripture plan has in it all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in theory and experience. It will be the study and the admiration of eternity. Oh what a mercy to have a renewed mind—to be of the same judgment with God—and to be made to see things in the light of his revelation. I bless him for the great charter of grace, and that, in my last reading of it, he has much revived my heart with observing how all the parts perfectly harmonise, and, when compared together, each illustrates and beautifies the whole.

I wish you to feel, for I cannot express, how great confirmation I have received of the truth of God's word, and of his power still accompanying it. I am not more certain of any thing than of the divine authority of the scriptures. Every verse has spirit, and has life in it. When one finds it come to the heart, and written upon the inward parts, it nourishes, it feasts: no cordial beyond it. This influence is promised; and it is indeed almighty.

Can you think, sir, of any power beyond that which God has put forth in your heart and mine? "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." Our new birth is a new creation—and he did it by his word; which he made the ministration of his Spirit. Blessings on him! I feel the effects of this every time I take up my Bible: I set my seal to it, that it is more, much more, than the word of man. It is in truth the word of God; because it effectually worketh to this very day in them that believe. Its influence on the heart and life, to form them to the pattern of the word, is certainly far beyond all created power. Indeed it is a standing miracle. Now, finding this experience of God's power in and with his word, it has been made to me in this reading very precious. My love for it grew as I went on, both for its taste and its value. It was in taste sweeter than honey to the mouth—in value, above gold, "yea, than much fine gold." And all this was greatly enhanced by believing that the feast, sweet as it was, was only a foretaste, and the golden mine, though very rich, was only an earnest of unsearchable riches. Oh, what a book is this! Judge whether there be any thing like it. Truly, my friend, I cannot get enough of it. You know it is a good sign of health when people long for their meals. So it is in the mind. I have just done reading; and I want to begin again. My appetite is become keener. This feeding upon the word is not like the gross meat and drink of the body. No. There is nothing cloying in it. But when mixed with faith, it sobers the senses, it refines the faculties, and exhilarates the spirits. The believer says, "Oh what love have I unto thy word! All day long is my study and delight in it." Lord make it, every reading, more precious. All these considerations have received great confirmation in this last reading; because I have got one year nearer to the full accomplishment of all the Bible promises. This has vastly increased their value. I see them near. Yet a little, a very little while, and perfection and eternity will be put to their fulfilment. The word will be completed perfectly in all its promises—eternally in all their glories. Oh, what a day will that be! What Joshua said of Canaan, xxi. 25; xxiii. 14, 15; will be true of heaven. Faith realises it. Faith brings into some present enjoy-

ment. All things in the world look great when they are near. As you go from them, they appear less.

Now it is the property of faith, in the exercise, to bring the promises near. As faith grows by hearing and reading, it brings the promises nearer, and thereby makes them look greater. The home-prospect familiarises them, and presents them to our view with growing charms. Believe me, sir, this is a matter of fact.

The eye affects the heart, and puts new beauty on the good things of Immanuel's land, which, though they be at present in promise and hope, yet faith has a magnifying glass, which can open such a prospect as is full of glory and immortality. This view of the Bible is inexpressibly glorious. It reveals, it realises; it brings into present enjoyment eternal things. It is my constant prayer for S. friends, that they may be these sort of Bible-Christians. May you live more up to it than I do. I was going on; and my paper said, stop. Take a line to thank Mrs. —— for her letter. It was a cordial. God bless her for it. Thank Mr. —— for love expressed—and proofs of it many; for which Mr. R. will come with returns of love for love. Mrs. R. joins in every good wish to you and to the family. My best wishes to brother K. What if he were to give the Lord of the harvest the honour of 1784? He giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. He giveth us the Spirit to sow the seed. He rains upon it. He shines upon it. It ripens. It is gathered in. It is used. And whenever the believer fills his belly, his heart is full of gladness. He gets the food: God gets the praise. May my brother magnify the Lord of the harvest, and pray for W. R. and all his.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXXIII.

Reading, *Oct.* 27, 1784.

My dear Friend.—I have scarce ever lost sight of you since I left S. And I hope to have you in remembrance, and on my heart, until I take my leave of this dying world. Your kindness to me and to mine is such, that I esteem it my privilege to make mention of you always in my prayers: and it is my happiness to believe that death itself will not part our friendship. It is from the Lord, and in the Lord: thanks be to him, I do feel myself interested in your interest—your children—connexions—minister—and in whatever is for your good. And I trust it is the same with you.

I only take up my pen to inform you of what you expressed a great desire to be acquainted with. Our common friend took care of us. We got safe and soon to Winchester. I acknowledge Mr. T.'s favour, and add one more to the long list. We arrived in good time, about sun-set, at Reading—found our children and their children well—the little babe rather better, but still in a weak condition. Since I got here, I have been arrested, and cannot be suffered to go home till next Tuesday.

Mrs. R. sends every good wish to you that our God has to give: Mr. and Mrs. C. join. Nothing short of all this is expressed by my son and daughter. This comes to you by the waggon, which sets out from hence this day.

Mr. T.—He who is your God and guide has led you hitherto, and done wonders for you. Go on trusting, and fear not. He has prospered you. He has blessed you. Commit your way unto him, and he will give you your heart's desire, and wife, children, &c. &c. all shall be blessings

Mrs. T.—May the giver of faith increase yours, that as a wife, mother, and mistress, you may adorn your profession.

Miss T.—I have been courting for you a husband, and got his consent. Give him your heart and your hand. Take him, and try him. No evil can befal you while his; all possible good will become yours. Herein I tread in his steps, 2 Cor. xi. 1, 2. May he be yours for ever, even my Jesus.

Miss Esther.—The world 's a cheat. It flatters you. Your senses join, and

without Christ they will make a fool of you. Your sister has made a good choice. Follow her example, and God will give you infinitely better things than you part with for him.

Mr. W. T.—Take my advice. I wish you well. It rejoices my heart to see you dutiful and diligent: this is from God: but do not stop here. There is an infinitely greater estate to be got than all S. Ask, and it is yours: believe, and you get possession. Seek it by believing, and you shall have it. My wish for you is unbounded—even the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Mr. S. T.—Mind your business. Pray over it. Prayer is as needful as all outward means. I will do my part. May God command his blessing on your person, and on your trade, that both may prosper.

I have much to say to my namesake, and to Tommy and Sally, and to my own John: but I must wait a little. It is so cold, that I can scarce hold my pen: and all so badly written, that I can but just read it myself. We go to town on Tuesday next, God willing. I shall have occasion to write to Mr. T. soon; so that I can only say to him and to you at present, that I do love you, and hope to show it in word and deed, as long as I can write.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXXIV.

Blackfriars, *April* 21, 1786.

My dear Mr. ——.—Last night we heard from —— by the penny post. All well. Oh, how good is our God! I delayed not. According to request, a short answer. First, that Mr. —— did not use you well. He might have taken down the books, and my account of them; which is, that the "Life of Faith," as I have revised and corrected it, comes out as my dying testimony for Christ. He has an infinite fulness, not only to be looked at, not only to be believed in, but also to be made use of. Herein most professors of the present day fail sadly. May P. be out of the number! He has, under the care and management of his providence and grace, all things that belong to body and soul: and he allows us, commands us, to trust all in his hands—to undertake nothing without his direction—to carry it on without looking up for his blessing; and, when ended well, without giving him thanks. Here only the soul gets rest, and, by living thus, maintains it, notwithstanding the life we live in the flesh is in constant opposition: but he who is on the side of faith is Almighty. And he says to Mr. —— "Trust, and be not afraid what flesh can do unto you." May he speak that to your heart a thousand times while you are reading the "Life of Faith!" Though the spring be backward, yet our spiritual spring has been very fruitful, full of life and power. It has been a fruitful Easter. The resurrection of plants and trees, at this season of the year, puts us in mind of our spiritual resurrection, and daily says, Are you alive? Are you growing? If alive, you must grow. Give my love to Mr. ——, and tell him that I wonder how he manages so much business, and so well. I have but one; and it is too much for me. Suppose he gets upon my shoulders, he will see as far, if not farther, than I do. Well; for once I will let him get up. Our Easter text was Rev. xx. 6, "Blessed and holy," &c.

1. What is the first resurrection? The soul raised from the grave of sin.

2. The necessity of it. By nature dead to God, and the spiritual world. Eph. ii. 1, 2; Col. ii. 13; John iii. 7. A man must be born into this world before he can live in it. So into that.

3. The means by which the soul is raised from the grave of sin. 1. The Spirit, John iii. 5. 2. The word, James i. 17, 18. 3. Faith, John i. 12. 4. Evidences. Spiritual senses—exercised. Spiritual things—enjoyed.

The senses exercised on Christ, all spiritual things in him: in him dead to sin, the world, the flesh; in him blessed and holy; blessed by making us holy. The senses see, and hear, and feel, &c. what they live on. Alive as branches in the vine, as members in the body, one with the head—the same Spirit in them as in him, same life, holiness, blessedness.

Tell Mr. —— that I have given him a subject so copious, that he may mind his boys more, and study less. My love to him, and perhaps he may not have done till I hear him. Our love to our old friend Mrs. ——. My blessing on her dear children, not forgetting any of yours. Pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXXXV.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—As I was going to church last night, Mr. —— told me, that he had a parcel to send to-day for Mrs. ——. I took the hint, and this morning embraced the opportunity of writing a note to inform you of the publication of Mr. Adam's volumes, which I mentioned to you, and for which you said you would subscribe. The price is half a guinea. I owe more to this man (saving the honour of grace) than to all the world. May you read, as I did, to my first comfort, his lectures on the church catechism. These books I have not yet perused; but I know the man well; and I expect for myself, and I pray for you, Mrs. ——, and brother ——, that every page may warm your hearts, and keep us thankful to the God of our salvation. I subscribed for twenty-five sets; so that if you know of any persons who would prize such a treasure, I should be glad to dispose of some of mine to them. You seem to be anxious after my observations on the perusal of the Bible in 86. I had made several remarks in reading, and had put down more after I had finished. I believe I had the paper somewhere in safe custody; but I cannot lay my hand on it now. When I meet with it, and have a leisure morning, perhaps it may travel down to ———; hut it will not be of present use to you, if you had it. I read for myself, chiefly for mine own state and age: I wanted to gather together in one view the promises made to old people: for the Bible is of universal use, suited to all persons in all circumstances; insomuch that you cannot place a believer in any possible situation but the scripture has amply provided for his case, matter of instruction, support, and comfort. When I came to put the passages together, I could not help blessing my God for his great grace in taking such particular notice of the aged and the infirm of his family, and in promising them his help according to their needs. This has been to me, and is still, a standing cordial: so that I am a witness for God. I set to my seal that God is true; and I subscribe with my heart and hand, that he is faithful to every promise made to old age.

Signed and sealed this 17th day of November, 1786.

W. ROMAINE.

You do not want at present, and you may never live to want, this collection, which I made for the aged and infirm. But I have a paper by me, which may be of daily use to you, on which I set a great value, because it was written about twenty years ago, and sent in a letter to my dear friend Mr. Powys of Salop, now with God. He esteemed it so greatly, that he had it printed, and used to have one of them pasted on the inside of every Bible which he either used himself, or gave away. It is so short, that I can transcribe it: and I send it with my prayers, that it may be verified in your heart and life.

"Sir, I herewith send you the Bible, which I had heen recommending to you—a book of inestimable value—containing the great charter of grace, by which the Lord God, Jehovah Alehim, has granted under his hand and seal, hy his covenant and oath, a full discharge from sin and misery, and a perfect title to life and glory everlasting. These hlessings he has given in his Son; and he applies them by his Spirit: therefore the record of God concerning his Son is the subject of the whole book.—What he was to be in his person, Immanuel, and what he actually was, God manifest in the flesh.—What he was to do and has done.—What he was to suffer and has suffered.—His resurrection.—His compiete redemption.—His prevailing intercession.—And what he will do for his people in glory. These points are treated of at large. And hecause we are dead to

these truths, we cannot understand nor believe them, nor make the proper use of them by any power of our own: therefore God the Spirit, who inspired the book, still accompanies the hearing of it, and renders it the effectual means of quickening the dead, of working the saving knowledge of Jesus, and, through faith in him, of manifesting the love of the Father. Would you grow in this knowledge, in this faith, in this love? Here is the ordinance of God. His almighty power still accompanies his own word; still he works in it and by it as truly as when he spake, and the world was made—when he commanded, and all things subsist. Hear, read, study, meditate, mix faith with it, pray over it; and you will find it able to make you wise unto salvation—and that is as wise as you need to be. 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15, 16, 17. What think you of this, Mr. ——? Is not the Bible truly inestimable? May you find it more precious every day! I wish the inspirer may write out a fair edition in the heart of Mrs. ——; that she may know and feel for herself what is the meaning of Jer. xxxi. 33, 34."

My good wishes follow Mrs. ——, &c. The blessing of the Lord my God be with them all! I inclose a little tract, which you have seen and read. I beg of you to read it again for my sake. There were so many shabby editions, and one by ——, not to the author's honour, that I thought it right to let it come out in its primitive dress. Here it is. Read—admire—and bless God for it, with

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXXVI.

May 23, 1787.

What through infirmity, business, and the King's too, preaching four times every week, and often five, visiting the sick from Hyde-park corner to Mile-end, and a fixed dislike to writing letters—indeed, to almost every thing but preaching —once more I take up my pen, this 12th day of May, 1787, to acknowledge myself so much in your debt, that I am like a man, who owes such a sum, that he is afraid to meet his creditor. This arises from being ashamed of myself, and not from a fear of being arrested. An honest man's word is his bond.

I believe you have it under my hand, that I would send you some hints of our new year's sermon. Such as I can remember, you shall have. They were taken from the life of an extraordinary person, Enoch, the wonder of his time. "Enoch walked with God." It is a custom with you this day, to wish one another a happy new year. There is but one true happiness; without which the wish is but an empty compliment. To be in Christ, as Enoch was, is the only thing which can make a sinner happy: and to live and walk by faith in Christ, is the only way to enjoy that happiness. This from my heart I wish you all. May you know it now in the beginning of the year, and find it increasing unto the end of it. With this view, let us consider the history of Enoch, and the use we ought to make of it. Let us look for God's blessing! (a short prayer). Ever since the fall, there has been one way in which the natural man has walked, being "earthly, sensual, and having not the Spirit;" he follows his own carnal will. He is quite dead to God; but very much alive to sense. Dead in trespasses and sins, therefore he walks according to the course of this world—following the lust of the flesh—the lust of the eye—and the pride of life—a course directly contrary to the law of God, and to that perfect love of God which his law requires. What strong proof of this does matter of fact give us? The searcher of hearts declares, Gen. vi. 5, 11, 12, 13, that all flesh had corrupted itself, and that therefore he destroyed the earth, that then was, with a deluge of water. And, from that time to this, the history of the world, and especially the infallible history of scripture, assures that men have turned every one to his own way, erring and straying from the way of God. Thus speaks the Oracle: "And you hath Christ quickened," &c. Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3.

Men are still by nature the same—ignorant, foolish, disobedient, &c. Titus ii. 3, 4, &c. And they will grow worse and worse till the world, which once perished for its sin by water, will be utterly destroyed by fire: so that, from the beginning

to the end of time, there has been one way in which mankind have walked; and that was directly contrary to the way of God. How came Enoch to be singular? He took a different course from his companions. While they all went down the stream, he swam against it. Upon what motive did he act? He had received the Spirit of life, who had opened his eyes, and made him see his guilt and feel his danger. He was enabled to believe the promise of a Redeemer who should save him from his sins and his miseries. He rested on the faithfulness of the promiser, and, having found joy and peace in believing, he set out to walk with God. He left the course of the world, that he might enjoy his friendship, who had said to him—"I am the way." That this a true state of the case appears from Enoch's conduct with respect to God. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. The spirit of the world is opposite to the Spirit of God: yea, these two are at such enmity, that nothing can make them love one another: but Enoch was saved from a worldly spirit: he was reconciled to God, and walked with him as his loving father through faith: so says the apostle, Heb. xi. 5, 6 He was a sound believer, and he witnessed it in word and deed—going on in the walk of faith, just as many (365) years, as there are days in the year—pleased all the way with God, and God with him; and then he took him to himself This also appears from his conduct with respect to the world. He preached against them. He was the seventh from Adam in the holy line, a preacher of the righteousness which is of God by faith. He lived against them. He walked with God, demonstrating the soundness of his principles by a holy walk. His actions declared that he had found pardon and peace in being reconciled to God through Christ, whose friendship was dearer to him than all the joys of the world; and he prophesied against them. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him the punishment that was going to be inflicted for the universal corruption of faith and morals; from which nothing could save the world but repentance and turning to God. And he was a true prophet; his words came to pass, as you may read, Jude 14, 15. The judgment which he foretold was executed; and God brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. Moreover, the Lord gave his own testimony to the goodness of Enoch's life, to the truth of his preaching, to the infallibility of his prophecy, by a miracle, as you may read in Genesis, and in Heb. xi. He took him to heaven without dying; hereby giving a demonstration that Enoch was right with God, and that whoever should walk in the steps of his faith, although he might not be translated to heaven in such a miraculous manner, yet he should most certainly follow him to life and bliss everlasting. My promise is at last fulfilled. These are the outlines, as well as I can remember them. The application on the subject of the day was chiefly in the way of exhortation—calling my people to remember Enoch, as I call upon you. The same conviction of sin and danger, the same faith, the same walk of faith, will bring you to the same end.

May Enoch preach to you every day! follow him, and then the year will be happy.

To brother ——'s case I am no counsellor. My judgment is singular perhaps: I am married to my parish: called by Providence; fixed; I do not look out, "should I be better off—more useful,—would it not be of God, if the king should send and offer me the bishopric of London?" I have nothing to do with preferment: it is my honour, my profit, my pleasure, to preach at Blackfriars as long as I do preach. Here the head of the church placed me, keeps me: it is my charge. He can do much or little, as it is his holy will, by me: and the being in his will is my paradise. But I quarrel with nobody who thinks differently from me. Mrs. R. has Mrs. ——'s letter; and I wish her inquiries may be successful; her love and mine to Mrs. ——. The wet morning has kept me free from visitors, and given me a long-wished opportunity of assuring you that I daily remember you in the best moments, and recommend you to our best friend. Do not cease to pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXXVII

Letters to W. T. Esq.

Monday, Nov. 12, 1787.

My good Friend.—Having an opportunity, by favour of Mrs. Romaine, to send my respects, I do it with pleasure. The remembrance of my time spent with you affords me many pleasing reflections. It is the most profitable part of the year for myself. I am most alone. I cannot get any such seasons for meditation as you afford me. This visit was greatly blessed, and produced one thing, which, as Providence favours, I am now carrying into execution: it is my last testimony for Jesus. What he is—how he feels—what he has attained—who has been long an experienced believer—and in his own views is near death, and quite prepared to meet his God. I have kept it back for several years, that I might see and try whether any thing new could be suggested on the subject from scripture or from my own life. But I am satisfied with what I had written, and I am now revising my papers. I beg you would help me with your prayers, that I may keep the ark steady, and hold forth nothing but what will tend to establish believers in their most holy faith.

I had a commission for you for some of Mr. Adam's works; but I fear they are not to be had. Prize what you have, and make much of your present set. If I can get you any, I will lay myself out for you. I believe the other books may be had.

Inclosed, to encourage you to pray for me, and for my present work, I send you a little tract (which you never saw before) printed by me, as a companion to an "Earnest Invitation," &c., as you see at the end. It is the only copy I have. Pray lock it up safe till called for. I sold upwards of 50,000 of them. I intended to write till Mrs. R. sent for my letter. I may not add any more, but that if you are not as happy at —— as God can make you, it is not the fault of your true friend in Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

March 5, 1788.

My dear Friend.—I am in your debt for Jan. 1st, 1788. It has never been out of my mind; but I have really too much business for my age and growing infirmities; yet, whenever I think of lessening my work, Luke ix. 62 frightens me, and I set out afresh to get on, as my Lord shall help me. Our word for this year is preaching day and night to my inmost soul—I am "Looking to Jesus"—a sight that would do an angel good—and much more a sinner; for his name is Wonderful. There is none like him in heaven or earth. Consider his nature, his essential glory, or his offices, his mediatorial glory—from what he saves us freely, and to what he brings us perfectly, even to life eternal: surely he is a matchless Jesus; and he wants only to be known, that he may win our hearts, and we may admire and adore him. Why is not he, then, universally admired? If man had no failing in his faculties, he could not help falling in love with such infinite beauty. But he is blind—yea, truly he is dead. He has lost not this or that thing, but the very Spirit of life, and thereby all communion with the spiritual world; he is actually dead in trespasses and sins. And, when the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus frees him from the law of sin and of death, then he receives spiritual senses, and is able to see him by faith, who was before invisible. His first look is generally for healing. He beholds the Lamb that was slain, and finds peace through his cleansing blood. The Spirit gives him to seal the testimony of the Father concerning the Son. He believes, and the more simply, the more virtue flows from Jesus, to purify and to rejoice the heart. He believes on, reads the faithful word, hears it, prays over it, and the Spirit applies it,

making Jesus still more precious. Every fresh look to him confirms the reality, and increases the blessedness of living by faith upon him: and thus daily communion with him nourishes spiritual life, and renders it more easy, and more delightful. These were some of the outlines of our new year's sermon—How we get eyes to see Jesus—and how fresh sights make our eyes stronger. The eye-salve of his word and Spirit clears the mental organ, and enables it to behold more wonderful things than Adam saw in paradise. May the prospect brighten upon you; and the more beautiful it is, may he speak to your heart, and say, "All this is yours."

My friend, we proceeded thus: If this be your faith, now try it. The trial is God's way of improving it. Jesus being the author and the continuer of faith, he expects that we look up to him constantly for our

1. Safety, as 1 Pet. i. 5. "We are kept," &c.

2. Growth; being alive by him, we grow by cleaving to him, as the branch to the vine, Eph. iv. 15. "But *holding* the truth in love," &c.

3. All spiritual blessings flow from him, Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be," &c.

4. All temporal blessings, holy use of troubles, burdens, wants, sickness, trust, as Isa. xxvii. 1, 2, and they will be profitable; and health, and money, and lands, and all good things in life, shall be sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

5. Come what may—Trust on, look to Jesus; and Rom. viii. 28, shall be infallible truth.

6. "But he may lose sight and be blind for ever." 1 Cor. i. 7, 8, 9, cannot be broken. He shall see the King in his beauty.

7. "But he may fall and be lost." Oh, no. Christ's prayer, John xvii. is as effectual as ever. Heb. ii. 13.

8. "But he must die." Well, a dying man, looking to Jesus, may hear him say—"Fear not; I am with thee," Psal. xxiii. 4. He has a good warrant to be comforted as long as the breath is in his body—and then, "all these died in faith."

9. Oh! what will this man find when he opens his eyes, and sees Jesus in his glory. The Lord the Spirit prepare us for that sight, and keep us looking to Jesus by faith till we see him by sense.

Thus I have fulfilled my promise. You have a little sketch of the business of 1788. God make it prosper in your hands. Mr. M. has been here twice: he suffers, but profits. We had a great deal of conversation, and much to my profit. I cannot get him Adams. "Wesley's at Southampton"—do not trouble yourself about them. I was a great horseman when young; and when riding through a village, it was not worth while to stop, though I had a long lash whip, to stay and beat every cur that came out. My dear brother, I hope, will let them alone—and preach Jesus. My love to him, and to all the family. Farewell, and pray for

W. Romaine.

Love to all at Hanover Buildings—God prosper whatever they have in hand!

LETTER CXXXIX.

May 3, 1788.

My good Friend.—I am fully satisfied you do not forget the Master, nor his servant. I please myself with thinking that you are living what I teach, and that our word for 1788, "Looking to Jesus," is realised at ——. I believe he has opened your eyes. You do see him—a true Jesus—but not in all his glory. The object is too great for the eye of faith, and too bright when we come near it. But if you will humbly ask for some of his eye-salve, it will marvellously strengthen the nerves, insomuch that you may see him who is invisible—enough of him to win all your affections. Such sights bring applications. He is matchless beauty, and mine. He is all perfection, and I am perfect in him. The wonder of Heaven, and soon I shall see him face to face. This hope makes

studying the word, believing, growing up into him, very sweet and improving. Every fresh view of his heavenly person begets some conformity to him, and wishes for more.

So far I had written, when I found the glass must come: and I was not willing to send so much blank paper with it: therefore I kept it by me, till some favourable opportunity should let me go on with this Looking to Jesus—to a real, a believed in, a precious Jesus. So he is, this May the 3d. I have been consulting one who was quite enraptured with his Lord's beauty, who had seen him in his glory; and he gave me great encouragement to proceed in this divine study: for he said to me, "After twenty-three years' happy experience of what he is to me, besides the visions and revelations which I had of him in paradise, still I know him but in part: yet, what I do know has such a powerful influence upon my heart and life, that I am still pressing forward, and I will, God helping me, until I know even as also I am known." Oh this was sweet advice! You cannot think what good it did me; for I found my case and the apostle's were much alike: I do, blessings on him, I do know my Jesus truly, and savingly; yet it is but little; I am not satisfied with my attainments: more, far more remains to be known of this infinite object; and therefore it is not enjoyed: a sense of this keeps alive a constant appetite for fresh discoveries; and this hungering and thirsting is not in vain: it is the vigour of spiritual life in the kingdom of faith. The health of the soul is more seen in its desires than in its enjoyments; for we have flesh and blood; and they let us feel we are not at home. We have also many mighty and cunning enemies, who are always attacking and often robbing us of our sensible enjoyments; and yet faith can live and thrive amidst all: it can break through every obstacle that stands between it and its beloved; trusting to what God has promised, and waiting patiently for his fulfilling it. If he hide his favourable countenance, yea, if he appear as an enemy, the believer trusts, and is not afraid. These are some of the workings of faith, by which its truth, its efficacy, and its blessedness, appear. May the witness for Jesus keep them very strong upon our heart! It is his office, while we are absent from our dearest friend, to preserve longings after him in our souls—warm breathings (such as Psalm lxiii. throughout), fervent desires, not to be satisfied till they get full enjoyment; and in this way the Holy Spirit glorifies the Saviour. What he manifests to us creates such an appetite for him, as only God-Jesus himself in glory can fill. All the grace we now get out of his fulness is but a whet of what we hope to get out of the same fulness in glory. Now, this is living and thriving faith. The more I have, the better I am; and you too are better for my betterness. It makes me wish the best thing for you: although you do not always treat me as I could wish. You would do me a great favour to employ me more. You have a wedding in hand. I expected to be invited to it: not down to Southampton, but up to my Lord. His presence I would have intreated: and he is as famous now as he was at Cana of Galilee for turning cold water into generous wine. My love to them, and my prayers for them, that he may every day repeat the miracle at ——. God bless you all. And remember to pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXL.

June 12, 1788

My dear Friend.—Your last letter brought me down upon my knees.—— Poor W.! I feel for you. I pray you may have a right use of this visitation. It can only be sanctified by the Spirit of God and prayer. May you meet it in faith, and improve it by patience! A child—a pleasant child—of fair hopes—I have lost such a one; and I well remember it gave me occasion to exercise all the grace I could get. I found an infinite fulness; and there is the same for you to go to. And now your children are growing up, they will make you very miserable, or else they will compel you to be daily learning, Heb. iv. 16. Read it. Meditate well upon it. Pray over it. It is a lesson of constant practice. If

your children live; if they prosper; if they get on in spiritual success, as well as temporal; if they be sick; if they should die: all will try your faith, and make you feel that your whole dependence for yourself and family is on the Lord who made heaven and earth. Whatever may be the event of W.'s complaint, we know not. But our Lord has taught us to live in subjection to his holy will, whatever he may please to send. Mr. T., you are not to learn this, at your time of day, in theory: but how to practise it is the point; and therein most of us fail. We none of us carry our subjection so far as he warrants us: his rule is "If any man be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." This carries the terms of discipleship very high. A man must deny all that he has and is, as a child of Adam—himself—as being under the law, under sin, and under condemnation. No possible hope in himself. And then he takes up the cross, which was the instrument of death, and to which the curse of the broken law was annexed, and executed too, on Adam, and all his descendants. He pleads guilty; owns the sentence just; carries about with him an abiding conviction that he deserves the curse and death, due to sin, as his wages. He puts the life of Adam, what he lives in the flesh, upon the cross, and henceforward lives by the faith of the Son of God—really dead to all hopes—except what Christ is to him. It is a great trial to have your son sick: it will be a greater if God should take him from you. But such a trial does not come up to our Lord's meaning. We call every thing that goes contrary to our will, a cross; but this is far short of the matter. Christ's disciple must not only deny the will of the flesh, but himself: not only all trust in the flesh, but life itself. If he has come aright to Christ, he has come with a halter about his neck: ay, and has it on still—owning, that the cross and curse, due to sin, are due to him. He submits to the penalty; and, moreover, waits with faith and patience for the execution. It is thus the Spirit of God makes Christ his one hope—breaking off all connexion with Adam's world, and with the life we derive from Adam. He quickens us into Christ, and into Christ's world. This is a total resignation: not only the will, but the whole man, is crucified with Christ. The greatest thing we have—life itself—is resigned to him. And thus the disciple is taught submission in all other things. It becomes easy then to say—ay, and to practise too—"Take away what thou pleasest, Lord: not my will, but thine, be done!" Duties are all alike easy, trials all alike tolerable, when we meet them in the strength of Christ; but when we would do them, or bear any part of them ourselves, then we find our perfect weakness. A disciple feels his resistance, and lays the burden upon Christ; who says to him, "I will sustain thee." His almighty power fulfils his word; and through him faith and patience do their perfect work. This is following Christ. May you at this time, and at all times, be one of his happy disciples, denying yourself, taking up your cross daily, and following the Lamb whithersoever he leads you.

It will not be unseasonable to remind you that you cannot lay in a stock of grace, and thereby keep your heart in any preparation to submit cheerfully to God's will, especially when it is much contrary to your own. No past experience can enable you to bear a present trial. You must have fresh grace for the moment, as you breathe, Isaiah xxvii. 3; so is the spiritual life: it is not from yourself, any more than your animal life: we fetch both from without us. Your genial warmth is light in every part of solids and fluids, as electrical experiments demonstrate. And it is the action of the air, by which you breathe, and move, and have your being. The life and liveliness of your soul depends entirely on Christ, the light of life, and on the Holy Spirit, the breath of life; and you can only receive, and can only enjoy, these influences from Christ and the Spirit, as you are living every moment by faith. This is the holy art of believing: by it a beggar is enriched, a sinner pardoned, the weak strong in the Lord, the miserable blessed, the dying disciple lives for ever. May you practise this holy art, and become the happiest believers in the island. W. has a friend in need to pray for the good effect of the waters. When you write, remember me to him and his companion. I charge you to pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXLI.

Aug. 13, 1781.

My dear Friend.—I have not been at all well since I left you: a giddiness follows me constantly, and sometimes I am ready to fall. I am aware of the consequences; and, thank God, I have nothing to fear, come what may. Nay, though it be a fair warning that the house is growing ruinous, yet I have a prospect of another building—a house of Immanuel's making—out of the reach of death and misery—fit for Immanuel's land, which is a country far, far better than Paradise. It is made so to me by free gift, the grant accepted by faith, and the earnest of the Spirit enjoyed. In the grant is death—a covenant mercy—by which we receive all covenant blessings. And for all in hand and in promise, I am kept looking to Jesus. I am afraid to say much of myself, lest I should fall into a mistake which I have often noticed and blamed in Mrs. Rowe, that she talked too much in raptures, and shot too high—far above common Christians' heads. However, let him have his glory. He won the crown: let him wear it. Keep him in sight in all his gifts—in all his graces—every thing will then go well. This is my old lesson, and my new lesson daily. Pray, I charge you to pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXLII.

Blackfriars, *Nov.* 8, 1788.

Friday Morning, Nov. 7, 1788. I sit down to write to my good friend W. T., intending to fill up this paper to-day, if I am able. I owe you for a very friendly note: the contents were all matter of praise. How thankful should you feel, how humbly should you walk, under a sense of such mercies! And even for this, there is an ample provision made. Grace from which all good comes, is ready to make you truly thankful, and to keep you humble; and if you use ever so much grace to increase humble thankfulness, yet, always remember the character of our Jesus. He giveth more grace.

I got no further yesterday—called off by business, visits, &c. Saturday morning. I am looking at that most blessed Giver of more. He is like the sun which is never weary of sending out more light: nor is our sun of sending out more grace—fresh—always adding—more in quantity—more in quality—better and better—and the last the best—even eternal grace—the crown of all. Mr. T., I tell you a great secret; and it is all I have learned in a very long experience. By putting this word to every thing, it makes a miraculous change; it really turns evil unto good. Misery with grace can feel happy; pain is sweet; gracious poverty makes rich; a weak believer, out of weakness, becomes strong—weak in himself, therefore strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Nay, no dispensation can hurt where grace is exercised; indeed, nothing can hurt, not even sin itself: for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, &c. Rom. v. 20, 21. Read these two verses, and St. Paul's comment upon them, Ephesians, chap. i. and ii., and then tell me whether the grace of our Jesus ought not to have, and from me it shall have, constant use and employment as long as I have any being. May you, and yours, do the same: and then you will find showers of blessings coming down daily upon you.

All was good in your letter, except what related to Mrs. K.; and even that, put grace to it, will also be good. Grace can extract much spiritual health out of bodily sickness. I hope and pray she may be better for her present complaint, and find under it grace sufficient to make her say, from her heart, and her good man to join her, "Thy will be done!" But mind, this must be present grace, received moment after moment, out of the fulness of the God-man. We have no stock in hand: and when faith lives as it should do, it finds the benefit of receiving all, just as it is wanted, even fresh grace to thank Jesus for his grace.

I had written a long letter to W. on his going abroad; but I did not send it. Mr. I. and I cannot agree about the subject. I can live by faith, under a special

providence, and do as well, even for my health, in this smoky and dirty city, as they can do at Montpellier. Happier they cannot be. However, I wish them well. May they come home better in soul and body. Your daughter is going to be married. She has my prayers. May it be such a connexion as my Lord may approve; and then he will bless it. Mr. N. tells me much of your frequent visits, in which I truly rejoice. We have been alarmed at our good king's danger. To-day I hear the distemper has taken a favourable turn; and he is much better. Lord, preserve his precious life! Pray for him; speak to brother K. in public and in private to plead, like the poor widow. Mrs. R. is very hearty in her salutes to Mrs. T., as you know. I could not write from Reading, being quite taken up with visiting and with preaching; and now I do write, what does it amount to, but only a cypher, unless you please to put some numbers to it? I trust you will; and believe me to be, not in word only, but in deed and in truth, your real and fast friend, and faithful servant, in the Lord Christ,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXLIII.

Dec. 20, 1788.

MR. T.—Mrs. K. is sick; yet her sickness is not unto death. Oh what a mercy that her soul is alive—to God—in Christ. United to him, she is one with the fountain of life, and cannot be cut off: see John xi. 25, 26. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. May her partner, and all the family, knowing what it is to be in the Lord, when they sorrow, yet sorrow not as others who have no hope.

You seem to be much affected with the complexion of the times. So am I: and your support is mine also. The Lord reigneth—the Lord Jesus; and blessed are all they who put their trust in him. His subjects have nothing to fear in the worst of times; for their king is Almighty—Almighty to save them from all their sins—Almighty to save them from all their miseries—Almighty to give them all spiritual blessings—yea, Almighty to command the blessing, even life for evermore. Oh what a king is this! Oh what subjects are these! Who is a God like unto thee, God-Jesus, who pardoneth rebels, and makest them kings and priests unto God and the Father, and then adviseth them to sit down with thee upon thy throne of glory? The Lord reigneth in his kingdom of grace, by his word, and by his Spirit, conquering rebels daily, and making them his willing subjects, till they be all brought safe to the kingdom of his glory. Now, what makes these blessed views of Jesus, the King of kings, so quieting and comforting to my heart, is, that he is my King. This crowns all. He is my Almighty Saviour—my Blesser—my Keeper. His providence is over me for good, and he says to me, "Lest any hurt thee, I will keep thee night and day." And as to what concerns life and godliness, he says, "Cast all thy care upon me; for I care for thee." Jesus, Lord, I believe thee—the government is upon thy shoulders—under thy protection I am safe and happy. I know thou canst get thyself honour and renown in the darkest days, and the most stormy weather. Let the tempest rage ever so much, my pilot is Almighty. He says to the winds "Be still," and to the waves "Cease," and the stormy winds and waves fulfil his word.

Mr. T., here is my rest. I use means, as well as you. I am at my prayers. But Jesus is my only hope. The present prospect may appear to you very dark—a black cloud gathering: you fear what may come when it bursts in all its vengeance. My good sir, this is the time for faith, to exercise it—ay, to improve it. What of fair weather, and sunshining faith? How can one tell whether it be true or genuine? But to put to sea in our little boat, in the midst of a storm, the waves dashing over our heads, and threatening to swallow us up every moment; then to be able to say and feel—my Christ is with me in the boat, therefore I will trust and not be afraid; this is the proper working of the faith of God's elect. For thus the command runs: "Trust ye in Jehovah for ever—because in Jah, Jehovah is everlasting strength." Let brother K. turn to his Hebrew Bible, and tell you why I thus render the text.

I have been so much pleased with your thought "the Lord reigneth," that if God spare life and health, I will preach upon it new year's day, and make it my watch-word for the year 1789, giving the character of the person of the King—of the nature of his government, and what a peculiar sort of people his subjects are—saved, pardoned, justified, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ—how they live—and how they die—and how they live to die no more Pray for me, that I may be so enabled to set forth his praises, that he may be glorified in me, and by me, then, and for ever.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXLIV

Jan. 10, 1789.

Saturday morning. It is so cold, I can scarce hold my pen; but I cannot nelp writing to you my present thoughts. Pardon failings; as it is written, "Have fervent love among yourselves; for this love shall cover the multitude of offences," 1 Pet. iv. 8. I expected daily to hear of Mrs. K.; and I thank God for her. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for they lived in him by his Spirit, the Spirit of life, who had given them faith to receive Christ, by which they were united to him, and had grown up as members under him their head—living upon him as well as by him. Oh blessed life! for it is out of the reach of death, as Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he had been dead, yet shall he be made alive; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" So says he to you: he speaks what is as true to-day as it was then. Believe him, and dry up your tears. Mourn not as they do who have no such hope. Mrs. K. was in the Lord. She is in him now. She is with him now; and like him—like that standard of all perfection. Upon the ground of this faith, you ought to have a family meeting, and join in thanksgiving to our dearest Jesus, that he has vouchsafed to admit one of you to his presence, and into his glory: and then to improve the providence in prayer, that God would make you all ready. You will soon follow her—sooner than some of you think. Take warning. You have nothing to do here, that signifies any thing, but to prepare for death. God help you to live by faith, that the next of you who goes after her may be found in the Lord, and may live with him for ever.

Mrs. T., we have been at prayers for you. The best thing we can do. I know well the tenderness of your heart, and how you have felt your present loss. I believe you go for comfort where I would have you. He who has won your heart, is waiting to be gracious to you. He can supply with his presence your sister's absence. Whatever good you had from her was his gift; and now he takes it away, he can make up your temporal loss abundantly by his spiritual blessings. May you live near to him, and make so much use of him at this time, that you may now find him a precious Jesus; for, "Blessed are all they who put their trust in him." You know this well as a truth, but I wish you to feel its power. May you enjoy the presence and the love of our matchless Jesus, which is blessedness in the supreme. May he whisper to your heart—"I have made your sister as happy as my almighty love can. Wait a little, and I will do as much for you."

Mr. K., I trust we have one spirit, and feel as brethren for one another. I am sure I do for you. Where to go, and how to go for comfort, you know as well as I, even to the God of all comfort. He, and he alone, can give it you at this time. We, your friends, can only pray that you may make good use of, and receive much profit from, your present dispensation. You are sensible that wisdom to do this must come from above; and it is such a wisdom as produces miraculous effects to this, as truly as in the day when James wrote ch. i. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. *Probatum est.*

Miss K., weep not as those who have no hope. I am praying for grace to teach you submission to the will of our Lord. She was your mother: but remember

how she lived, how she died, and where she is now. Dry up your tears. You have work to do for the Lord. You are to fill up, for a time, your mother's place in the family. May my God give you grace, and prudence, and diligence, carefully to follow her steps. I shall not forget your brothers and sisters.

Mr. T., I am to thank you for your information concerning your guest. You have gladdened my very heart with your good account of my old friend. May it prove better than you mention. I am sure that Christ, and Christ only, can make him truly and completely happy. All is vanity besides. I wish he enjoyed what I have little of, and it would make me happier if he had all I wish him.

You see I can scarce hold my pen. It is cold, very cold; but I do not murmur. Frost, and snow, and stormy wind, fulfil his word; and in that word I trust, let the weather be what it may. His will be done. Remember Blackfriars. Here live two of your friends. Pray for them and theirs.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXLV.

April 27, 1789.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—Having the favour of seeing Sir Richard, I immediately thought of you; and although Monday is a day in which I am seldom fit for any sort of attention, yet, this opportunity of telling you that brotherly love continues makes me glad to sit down and write as long as I am able. I congratulate you on our late national mercies, which all the people have felt—those of the world in their way, and we in ours—in prayer and in praise, bringing God into our joys, and looking up to him, that he would give us fresh reason to rejoice in his holy name. I believe you and I are in unison; and perhaps I may strike an octave: the touching upon my joy may affect and increase yours. Never was I more disappointed, nor more agreeably, than on the 23d. I expected to be left alone, and to preach to stone walls; but, behold, we had a full church, and a blessed congregation of serious worshippers. Our subject was the 122d Psalm—a short paraphrase on it, with seasonable applications. As I take no notes, I can only give you some of the outlines. May they warm your heart as much as they did mine: for I had some of the prophet's joy, which he felt when he said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." They were going up to Jerusalem, as you know they did three times a-year. It was a pleasant occasion to the true worshippers who had received the Holy Spirit, by whom they had living faith in Jesus, and thereby believed and enjoyed the Father's love in him. They went up to the festivals to confirm and to increase their joy; for they knew well that the temple was the type of Christ's body, and all the public services there had relation to him. When they said, "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem," they then felt that true joy and peace in believing, which any of us now feel in reading—Rom. v. 1, 2; for the very word Jerusalem, which means the inheritance of peace, led them to look up to him who only is our peace, who only makes us heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; see Gal. iv. 22, to the end; Heb. xii. 22; Rev. xxi. throughout. And when they came to Jerusalem, how did it add to their joy—v. 3. All worshipping in one place, one object, one faith, and one uniformity of rites and services—v. 4. When the tribes went up, even the tribes of the Lord, they had the same testimonies, *i. e.* ordinances, as we have, all referring directly to the Messiah. The temple, its vessels, the holy place, the most holy, preached Christ as plainly as I can; for "they went up to give thanks unto the name Jehovah:" he was a person—the name Jehovah, as Exod. xxiii. 21; Isa. xxx. 27—that person who was to be God incarnate, Jehovah Jesus, through whom prayer, praise, duties, all we do is made acceptable, and through him only. In this faith, wherever a Jew was when he prayed, he turned his face towards the temple, acknowledging that the God worshipped at Jerusalem was his God. In this view they might well rejoice when they went up with one heart

and one voice to bless the name Jehovah; because to him they ascribe, as in v. 5, their civil as well as religious prosperity. Under him they enjoyed full security for life and property. A good government, according to the word of God, is a great mercy. This they enjoyed: they had a King sitting on the throne of judgment, ruling in the fear of God. Sensible of their blessings, and thankful for them, they exhort one another: v. 6. "Oh pray for the peace of Jerusalem—our church and state." They love Christ, who pray so; who feel for their brethren and their prosperity, and who know and value the house of the Lord our God, they will be much in prayer for the continuance of these inestimable blessings.

These meditations brought us home to England; and to inquire, whether we had not as much reason to rejoice to-day as they ever had on any festival at Jerusalem: we have the same religious, the same civil mercies, as they had, and we come behind them in nothing, unless we fail to-day, in our national praises: for our privileges are uncommonly great, and call for singular acknowledgments. We have religion in its purity—God's word in our hands—men sent of God to open and to explain it—and they are owned of him in their labours. No where in the world is the gospel in its truth, and in its power, as it is with us. Oh, what rich incense of praise should go up to the throne of grace from us this day! Oh what superlative thankfulness do these favours of God require of British believers, of you, and me! The gospel runs and is glorified, and yet the times are quiet. The government is on the side of our most holy faith. Our king, God bless him, is himself a defender of it. May he, by whom kings reign, look down upon him with a gracious eye this day. When he prostrates himself before his God, may the great Angel of the covenant take his prayers, and praises, and perfume them with much of his heavenly incense. Lord God, speak to his heart, and let him feel some of that joy and peace which surpass all understanding.

You can easily add what came in here concerning the day. It was only to call upon the people to thank the Lord our God, and to give him the glory due unto his great name for public mercies, family mercies, personal mercies. How high ought our praises to rise, sinners as we are, helpless, unworthy, yea, unthankful and unprofitable! Oh what a God have we to deal with, who loadeth such creatures with such benefits! What a mercy, that such poor thanks, and these his own gifts of grace, should be accepted at our hands! Holy Ghost, assist us in our prayers; help our infirmities in our praises, and teach us, with increasing gratitude, to adore the Son for his salvation, and to worship the Father for his love in Jesus. To the eternal Three be eternal praise.

What a scribble! But I could not stop. It was a glorious day, ever to be remembered in the annals of British history. Mr. K. got the lead: he will keep it. I have sold great numbers of his sermon, and should have sold the whole impression but for "price one shilling," that kept it out of many hands. My true love to your dear partner. My blessing on the whole family. Add to all good providences, what is really miraculous—Thursday's crowds, Friday's exceeding the day before, and nobody hurt Glory be to him in the highest!

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXLVI.

Blackfriars, *Nov.* 11, 1789.

My dear Friend.—I sit down, as your monitor, to thank our physician that you all keep so well, and that I hear Mrs. D. is a great deal better. If you would follow his recipes, all would mend. He prescribes one simple remedy; and that infallibly cures all diseases. Only believe. All that ever tried it, found its virtue never fail—no, not when life itself failed: the experience of every age has set its seal—*Probatum est.* And yet we have among us many pretenders to skill, who cry it down as a quack nostrum. Our learned doctors have shut it

out of the new London and Birmingham dispensaries; and they treat us as rank enthusiasts, who try to keep it still in practice. You know, sir, as well as I, what the great men of the day think of Jesus Christ, and of his remedy: but their opinion does not hurt you or me. We trust to matter of fact. A wounded conscience set at peace—a broken heart healed—a miserable sinner made happy—a dying sinner rejoicing in the prospect of death. Millions of such, who now see his face, and we, who now feel his virtue, are witnesses of his almighty power, and that he still saveth freely by grace through faith. To this truth I set my hand and seal, this eleventh day of November, A. D. 1789. It is all my salvation, and, God be thanked! it is all my desire. You have my living and dying testimony in a volume of sermons, which I have revised and just published. You will please to accept them as a token of brotherly love; and when you read them, may you feel real fellowship with your divine Jesus; as much, more if it please him, than he has most graciously vouchsafed unto me. Perhaps I may seem too warm (a little enthusiastic) in speaking of this happiness to some. Even believers are too apt to rest in the truth: but is it not therefore received that it may produce its proper effects? such as great joy and peace in believing; the unsearchable riches of Christ. What are they, if nobody is to be enriched out of his treasury? "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty."—Yes, I have had a glimpse of him, and I long to see more of his matchless charms. He hath promised, "they shall hear my words; for they are sweet."—Yes, Lord, I hear the joyful sound; and it is heavenly melody in my ears. "Thy name is as ointment poured forth." I feel its perfume, the smell of thine ointment is to me much better than all spices. "Come, taste, and see how gracious the Lord is." I have come, Lord, and thy fruit is indeed sweet unto my taste. "As many as touched him were made perfectly whole." Glory be to him who enables us still to handle the word of life. These are the five senses of the spiritual man: and each of them finds in Christ the proper exercise of its faculty. The bodily senses take in all the objects of nature: the spiritual senses take in all the fulness of Christ: and in him they have their employment, and will have their happiness for ever. The belief of this, and some enjoyment of it, make me wish that I myself, and you, my Christian friends, may have our senses more exercised in our own proper world, that we may get faster hold of Christ, may find him more precious, and every day may be growing up into him, and that in all things. You have great reason to pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXLVII.

MY VERY GOOD FRIEND.—You know our custom. We begin the year always with a motto. Ours for 1790 is—"Trust in him at all times." A year of especial faith. I would have it famous for believing—our bodies, and souls, and families, the church, the state, at home, abroad, call for much trust in our God. The word trust means to lean upon any thing which you think will support you, and you will do it with more or less confidence, as you are persuaded it is able to keep you from falling. This is a beautiful idea of faith, as it respects the word of God—our ground to lean upon. What has he said in his promise of salvation, and what security have I in leaning upon it, that I shall be a saved sinner? You have the word of truth, which cannot lie—the promise of a faithful God, who keepeth his promise for ever—his covenant, secured by the oath of the eternal Three, and all these guaranteed by the name which the Trinity have taken; namely, to be Alehim, engaged upon oath to be on the side of his people, their sworn allies, to defend them from all evil, and to give them all good in earth and in heaven. Notwithstanding the foundation of our faith is thus immutably laid, so as to render unbelief without excuse; yet, so it is, that they only believe to whom it is given. The Holy Spirit alone can convince of

sin, its guilt, its danger; how near the poor creature is to death and hell: he makes the conviction felt and effectual; and the man is in earnest to flee from the wrath to come. Then the divine warrant and the command to believe gain credit, and the truth of the promise is received, and thereby the blessing in the promise comes to be enjoyed. He is made to see that he has good ground to lean upon God's word; and he finds it safe trusting to such evidence, and thereby he experiences how blessed they are who put their trust in such a God, as Psalm ii. 12; because there is great joy and peace in believing.

It may be done safely—it may be done happily, at all times. What more can be said to recommend this leaning upon God's word? No case so desperate, of sin or misery, but the word reaches it with a promise; and faith, mixed with the promise, brings deliverance from all sin, Rom. viii. 1, 2, 3; from all misery—if it continues, it does good, Rom. viii. 28; and in the best time, a happy issue, as Zech. xiii. 9. Oh what a blessing is there in this passage of Zechariah! You have been tried lately in this fire, and you will again, and soon. Read it over and over; digest it; you will find it a sovereign cordial in an hour of need. God give you to see it in my light, and to get all the nourishment out of it of which it is full. Is it so, then, that no guilt, no trouble, should hinder a man from trusting in God: nay more, if these be the special times of trusting, let us consider what encouragement we have to make this year famous for believing, come what may.

First, for salvation, as verse 7. Fallen man is under the law—under sin, therefore dying and without any help or hope in himself; for there is salvation in no other than Jesus Christ. But, whenever any one believes in Jesus, he is saved freely by grace. The law no longer condemns—the lawgiver justifies. All iniquities are freely forgiven, and the peace of God rules (should rule) in the conscience always, and by all means. Death is changed into life, as John xi. 25, 26, even a life that cannot die.

Secondly, Oh what a glorious subject of rejoicing is here, called, verse 7, glory—God himself is our salvation. Here faith may triumph all the year: a paraphrase on Isaiah, chap. xii., especially on verse 3, rendered well; but Mr. K. can tell you that it is the fountain of salvation, which cannot, like a well, be drawn dry.

As salvation is for sinners, joy for the miserable, so the next word, verse 7, strength, is suited to the weak. The weakest believer has an almighty arm to lean upon in every trial, trouble, or temptation: he cannot fall, unless his faith fails. A paraphrase on that sweet hymn, Isaiah xxvi. 1, 2, &c., and on that blessed experience recorded 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9, 10. Strong in faith—strong in all. Thus, for all the possible events of the year, we have, as verse 7, God for our refuge, in the most desperate case that can be. Our Jesus is able to save to the uttermost: you may cast safely all your sins, and all your cares, upon God-Jesus His almighty power is with you, and for you. He said once, and, blessings on him! we find it true to this day—Fear not: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.—Who can tell the full meaning of this promise. However, leaning upon it, we may go with confidence through all the troubles of life, yea, through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil.

Oh what a year would this be, if we could always bring these principles into practice, without doubt or wavering! For you see that, in all cases, in all times, we are commanded to trust God in Christ; and in trusting we shall find, 1. Salvation; 2. the joys of it; and 3. the security of it: the Lord's strength being our keeper and our sure refuge in life and death from all possible evil.

These are some of our encouragements to set out in this new year with fresh spirits, that we may hold out, and go on from faith to faith. There is no temptation, enemy, danger, or corruption, which should stop us. Nay, these are so many motives for depending on God's promised help; so that neither what we feel within, nor fear without, should make us withdraw our confidence.

Then came the application, 1. To professors who have not faith; 2. To weak believers, who are so because they make not use of Christ's strength; for, under the teaching of his Spirit, the weakest is the strongest; and 3. To sound believers. The motives from this Psalm—a paraphrase was given upon it—then de-

siring them to read it at home, to get it off by heart, that in the shop, in the closet, in the exchange, wherever they were, or whatever they were doing, they might live by the faith of the Son of God; so that it might be a most famous year for the increase of faith.

Thus I have given the outlines of the religious history of the year 1790—*Annus Mirabilis*. May my character of it be fully verified at ——, in your heart, in Mrs. T., in your children and family—brother K. and his family, in his church, and in the heart and life of

W. ROMAINE

LETTER CXLVIII.

May 3, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I sit down with pleasure to answer two letters. You load us with favours, which I acknowledge in my way; with prayer and praise. Every morning of my life, to these I have a monitor, who reminds me whose honey it is that sweetens my tea. I stand up to beg the blessing of God on the gifts and on the giver. Mr. —— delivered into my own hands Mrs. T.'s presents. I had but short time to talk with him, though he found me alone, and very much disposed to converse with him of the very best things: he put it off till we should meet. Many thanks to my generous friend; but Mrs. Romaine is quite overcome with your kindness. She says, I cannot put her feelings into proper words, nor express to Mrs. T. the grateful sentiments of her heart. So you bind us to you with the sweet cords of love. I send you, in return, some of my good things—a word in season, which was our subject yesterday—and if the Lord please to rain and shine upon it, you will taste some of the rich fruit of the tree of life, which groweth in the midst of the paradise of God. The words were Psal. lxv. 10: "Thou blessest the springing thereof." He is speaking of the beauty of this season, when nature revives from the dark, dead winter, and the grass, and corn, and trees, grow and shoot forth. How verdant are the meadows! how flourishing the corn! what fair blossoms on the trees! promising us, through God's blessing, a fruitful year. Are we only to look at this delightful scene? and is it all to end in admiration? Oh no! A very important lesson is held forth, and made quite sensible. Nature in this, as in all other things, preaches and confirms the doctrines of grace—not by comparison or metaphor; but the God of nature so formed his works, that they should be standing records, outward and visible signs, to give us true ideas of spiritual objects. In the present case we have a fine spring season What is the cause of it? The earth itself is inert matter—acts only as acted upon. What pushes forward the grass, and corn, and trees? An unerring philosopher gives this account, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4: "He (Christ) shall be like the light of the morning when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Here has been a fine shower: after it the sun rises without a cloud: and this makes the grass spring out of the earth: the clear shining thins, rarifies the rain, impels it into the tubes of the plant or tree, drives it along as sap and nourishment: so all things grow. Look at Deut. xxxiii. 13, &c., which is a philosophical description of vegetation: "How the light pushes forth the sap, and makes all the precious fruits of the earth to ripen." This is the picture, created on purpose to give an idea of a spiritual spring. Christ is the light; his Spirit is the water of life: all men, by nature, are like winter, till Christ enlighten, and, by his Spirit, revive them: He breaks up their fallow ground, and fits it for the seed, which is the word of God. When the sower, who is the Son of man, puts his Spirit into the seed, then it has life, it grows, it bears fruit, a hundred fold, even fruit unto life everlasting. This answers a grand inquiry in the spiritual life: How shall I know that I have had a spring time and that any of the good seed has been sown in my heart? Answer, I feel I want it; my heart is fallow ground; and I wait on the sower, as Deut. xxxii. 2. "That he would put in the good seed, and give it the early and the latter rain."

But how shall I know that mine is really a true spring? By depending more on spiritual influences. Nothing grows in nature without rain and sunshine: so, in grace, nothing grows without Christ and his Spirit. A conviction of this will lead to the experience of Isa. lviii. 11.

But I do not grow as I could wish. It is a great growth to feel this. I want more showers. Oh, what am I, when the influence of heaven is withdrawn? Then I feel my dependence; then I see it good to wait for the showers of heaven; then I expect gentle rain, dropping, that it may soak in, and come down like dew, unfelt, unseen, only in its blessed effects.

But how shall I be certain that if I have a spring, I have the blessing of God upon it? Truly, thanks be to the Son of man, I have got some of the harvest—I bless him for fulfilling Hos. xiv. 5, 6, 7, 8. And I also rejoice in my God, the giver of my life, and of my liveliness. Psal. iv. 7 is my present state, and that most beautiful spring, mentioned Cant. ii. 10, 11, 12, 13, is what I am seeking and praying for. I wish I had room to give you my ideas of that sublime description. Call upon me for it, if ever I see you, and I give it you under my hand, that you shall know all that I know of it. The seed sown, growing, thriving, will ripen into a glorious harvest. Great joy and peace in believing is the first fruits. Oh how should they adore and worship him who have the foretaste of that eternal spring. It will be the same there as here, only more perfect, and more lasting. May the sun shine and the clouds drop down their influence upon Mr. and Mrs. ——, upon my dear John, upon every branch of your family, that we may all feel his life, his liveliness, and our growth by him into life eternal.

I have read the letter over. I am quite displeased with myself: it is very unlike what I see in nature's spring. Pardon it: and if it lead you to trust less to yourself, and more to the influence of Heaven, I shall be thankful for such a poor essay. Next Sunday I shall be nearer to you, and shall preach the sum of this letter in Reading, and hope to spend some time with my old friend, Mr. S. God bless you all, and pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXLIX.

My dear Friend.—How much I am indebted to you for so long a letter, I cannot say. I esteem it highly, and you for it. Knowing your great hurry of business, I could not expect it. But you are good, and I am thankful. At present I am also busy about my Bible; being suffered to live to read it over once more. Two things have occurred to me in the present perusal: in both which I am enabled to triumph. The one is a deeper discovery of the horrible state I am in through sin; so that, as a child of Adam, I feel nothing in myself but the working of corruption—by and under the law dead to God, but all are alive to sin—every faculty at work to bring it forth—the mind—the heart—the senses—yea, the very imagination, in prayer disturbing, distracting, quite lawless—I can do nothing but cry out, Rom. vii. 24. Reading verse 25, I get my second lesson, and find employment for my Jesus. A body of sin and death, like mine, wants an almighty Saviour, and I am learning to put more honour upon his word and work daily. I find more need of him than ever; and it is some true joy that he is most exactly suited to my desperate case; having no hope but in his blood; not one ray but in his righteousness; no strength but in his arm; no happiness but out of his fulness. I am led even to triumph in what he is to me. I would lay myself at his feet, and would bless his dear name, that he is become all my salvation; and glory in him, that he is now all my desire. It is the best reading that ever I had. Self was never so brought down, and so crucified daily: nor did I ever see so much reason to magnify the person of God-Jesus. In this spiritual crucifixion of self and sin—in this true growing up out of self into Christ—may the Holy Spirit teach you to profit daily. Pray for yours, in our common Lord,

W. Romaine

LETTER CL.

Nov. 10, 1790.

Mr. and Mrs. T.—Thanks—thanks for P—— mercies—for me and mine. I am told, it is a good thing to be giving of thanks; because it is the right improvement of past mercies, and the best way to secure a rich supply for the future. It keeps the eye where it should be, fixed upon the fulness of Jesus. He gave—he continues to give—and he will continue. All come from him. A mercy—the feeling it a mercy—and the praising him for it—this is grace for grace. It is his way, yea, his delight, to give thus liberally when he gets all the glory of his gifts. In this holy merchandise you may be as rich as you will. My friends, he will withhold no favour from you if you carry him back all his praise. Receiving his gifts, and thanking him for them, is the true spirit of the gospel, and is the practical improvement of it both in earth and in heaven. This is my lesson for the year 1790. I have just finished another reading of my Bible, and, as I told you, my profiting has been in a deeper discovery of the exceeding wickedness of sin, and of mine own heart-sin, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. If I had been only in the school of Moses to learn, I should, with such views of sin, have hanged myself long ago; but in the school of Christ, his Spirit enables us to feel daily more of the mystery of iniquity, that we may have occasion to know more of, and to trust more in, that offering of Jesus which perfecteth for ever. Thus things go quite right when Christ is exalted—and self is brought down, and kept down This seems to bring our religion into a very little compass; but the practice of this one doctrine is universal, reaching to all times of life, and to all things in life; keeping us ever dependent on the Spirit of Christ to teach, and on his power to enable us to live out of self upon the fulness of God our Saviour. Mr. ——, he can make you a better scholar than I am. For which blessing may my prayer be heard for you in the full sense of the promise —"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

I am for peace, in the church, in the state, in the family, in the conscience, in life and death—peace everlasting: all this Christ is to his people. Mr. N. is still alive—that is all; he is greatly supported. Pray for him. I am doing the same. Mr. John Thornton gone to heaven! Oh what a loss to the earth! After taking a most affecting leave of all his children, the Rev. Mr. C. asked him, "If he was happy."—"Yes," says he, "in Jesus." Oh! may our eyes never lose sight of him—still looking to Jesus till we see him face to face. Pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLI.

Dear Friend.—I can only inform you, by the bearer, that we are well. My Lord finds me constant work, and fits me for it. I am now praising him for letting me speak of his most glorious name, five times this week: and am going at it again twice more. Oh! he is a good Lord to me, who does me the honour to employ me still in the service. What are most people good for at my time of life? Yet he gives me a tongue to recommend him to my fellow sinners, and a heart to triumph in his salvation. My best preaching, my best praises, are gifts of his grace. Not unto me, but unto him, be all the glory. Upon his imperial head there are many crowns, and when I am hoping he has one for me, I am quite lost in admiration of such sovereign and supreme mercy. Some of yours are this moment got above me in a higher note of praise; but I shall soon come up with them; and I expect to see you join us, and sing as loud as any of us the glories of Immanuel. I am sure you have as much reason: the door of mercy will not be shut against Mrs. T. May God fit her, and all hers, for that most blessed meeting. I hope and pray that John will be a good boy, and brought to love our Saviour, that he may be where his brother and sister are, in glory. Tell him what that means.

H—— T——, Esq. M.P. laid the plan of the inclosed. The execution by Mr. S. is by no means equal to the plan. What a pity such a bright star should set, and so little notice taken of it.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLII.

May 5, 1792.

My dear Friend.—I thank you for the good account you send me of my doctor. I knew he would not fail you. Thanks be to him for blessing the means for Mrs. T.'s recovery. I hope for his further help. He can still do greater things; for he does nothing by halves: all his words and works are, like himself, perfect. If he undertake, he will infallibly complete the cure. So we read of his patients: however desperate their cases, they were all made perfectly whole. His hand is not shortened. He can remove every spiritual disease, and restore present and eternal health. Such miracles are not ceased. More faith in him would multiply them in number—more faith would increase them in experience—more faith would then bring him more praise: for thus we read of a healed sinner—"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." By this spiritual health, he works a wonderful effect upon the body. It is better than any medicine; not for keeping off diseases, but for bringing in the supports of patience, and the comforts of faith; by which a man, even in bodily pain, can be kept happy in his soul; yea, so happy, as scarce to feel the pain, for the greatness of his inward joy. Thus speaks the word—"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials." And the noble army of martyrs confirmed the word: they met death rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for their precious Jesus. I want Mrs. T. to come from Bath perfectly cured, as well as he thinks proper in her body, but in the highest health that can be, in her soul. She knows a good deal of his fame: but a great deal more remains to be known. He is not only a most wonderful physician for healing all the diseases of sin, but also for giving his patients every faculty which can fit them to receive, and to enjoy, the blessings of spiritual health. Oh what a Jesus!—what a Jesus!—He creates ears to hear the words of eternal life—eyes to see the King in his beauty, and to be enamoured with his matchless charms: and then to taste and see, what a most sweet Jesus he is!—Oh what a fragrancy! When the Gospel recommends his love, and the Spirit makes his name like the sweetest ointment poured forth, then the believer can, with his hands, handle the word of life: he hears, and sees, and tastes, and smells, and feels that his beloved is infinitely more than all other beloveds. Thus he gives spiritual senses and spiritual enjoyments to the inward man, and, come what may to the outward, he maintains joy and peace in believing, which the world cannot take away. Oh that you and Mrs. T. may go away from Bath, admiring and adoring his wonder-working love, healed in body, healed in soul, happy in both. You never, never can trust him enough, nor praise him as he deserves. His name alone is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth. May he become dearer to you every day: so he will, if you use him more. Let him be your companion in your journey. Take him to ——. Make much of him. Be intimate with him in your own room. Go not to W. without him. Do nothing without him. Living by faith upon him at all times, and for all things, whatever you take in hand shall prosper. He will bless your substance, your table, your children, your bed, your servants: he will load you with his benefits; and he will do you good all the days of your life; and when they come to an end, he will give you to depart in peace. After that, he will do greater things than I can tell you. My prayers, my letters, my life, are directed to him, that he would vouchsafe to make me any way instrumental in recommending him to you; that you, and Mrs. T., brother K., and all his and yours, may grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of our dearest Jesus. So prays my partner, who is

rather better, thanks be to our adorable physician. I am happy in believing that you have a brotherly remembrance of

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLIII.

Nov. 14, 1792.

My good Friend.—You will receive from Mr. M. a parcel,

1. Containing 100 pamphlets, on the Baptists, which I have for two-pence a-piece; at which price you may have as many more as you please till the new edition be printed;

2. "Horæ Solitariæ," two volumes;

3. A parcel from me, in which are the three keys—a volume on the book of nature;

The experience of Mrs. G.; and

The experience of M.'s daughter.

He has not the "Christian Parent" bound, but will soon send you a quarter of a hundred, at one shilling and nine-pence. I have also inclosed a little ode of Dr. Horne's, made several years ago: it is very pretty, and very seasonable; and the two last stanzas carry such a sweet lesson with them, that I have often made use of them in the pulpit at this season.

I am very thankful for your account of brother K.'s sermon. There is great need of such sound doctrine, and also of much prayer to our God, that he would be pleased to bless it; for the times are very feverish: but he can, and he only can, cool and quiet the inflamed spirits; and he only can keep us from the infection. I am therefore of his party, and of no other: and though we be but a little army, yet we shall prove in the end the strongest side; yea, come what may upon this distracted world, he will keep us safe from all evil. The persuasion of this makes us love him—gives us a zeal for his glory—and a holy sympathy with believers, and for unbelievers. In all which I have received great confirmation from Ezek. ix.; in which I find a fixed purpose to destroy the city, for the abominations committed by priests and people. The execution is ordered, and the destroyers have their commission; but they are not suffered to act till the Lord Christ sets his mark upon his own people, of whom not one was to be hurt. They were his sealed: his Spirit had set on them the seal, and faith received the impression. Their character as believers is beautifully drawn, v. 4. They were humbled, and mourning for unhumbled sinners, and crying and praying to the Lord for mercy for themselves, and for a guilty land. In their number may I be found—and herein exercising my whole system of Christian politics—grieved for my Lord's glory—grieved for those who rob him of it, and praying earnestly to him, that he would grant them repentance unto life—blessing at the same time his dear name for the distinguishing mark of his love, that he has enabled me to set to my seal that God is true. Oh my friend, we are as bad, as ripe for destruction, as Jerusalem was: we have great reason to mourn before the Lord, and to pray that he would spare this guilty land. Whatever he is going to do with us in the way of judgment, I know not; but I have infinite reason to thank him that the destroying angel cannot hurt one on whom is the mark. I verily believe, without doubting, that he has sealed you also for his own; and I can see the impression very legible on Mrs. T. May the Spirit who made it render it every day more plain and more practical—especially by the blessed fruits mentioned verse 4, of the holy mourners—that they may abound in a great harvest at ——, is the hearty prayer of

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLIV.

Nov. 27, 1792.

My good Friend.—I am still hard at work, hoping to get my book done before my life be, that I may leave my dying testimony for my Jesus. I find in him a sweet rest, while these storms and hurricanes are frightening my poor neighbours; and I sing the 46th Psalm with melody in my heart, giving him the glory due unto his dear name. Pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLV.

Dec. 1, 1792.

My dear Friend.— . . . So much for this affair: now for another; in which more than you and me are concerned. I fear children yet unborn. It is the evil, infinite evil, everlasting evil of sin; on which all the charges are to be laid of national, public, family, and personal suffering. God is angry at nothing but sin: his wrath against it is revealed from heaven—all sin, my sin. It is charged upon me; and I have fled to the city of refuge, sheltered by the sprinkled blood and by the mighty arm of my Jesus. When I live most upon him, he teaches me the true humbling of heart, for myself; and seeing from what he has saved me, my bowels melt over the sins and sufferings of others. Then he makes me plead with him for my fellow-sinners, and very thankful, more than I am, or can be, for myself. This is the only concern I have with the times. He is ruling by his providence, punishing sin, and warning sinners to take heed now he has his iron rod in his hand. Oh! spare Great Britain. Lord spare us, and give not thine heritage over to confusion. I have a long catalogue of national sins to pray over; as long as the prophet had, Ezek. ix.; and, I hope, with some of his faith. I told you before what a great honour it is to be among those holy mourners on whom God had set his mark: for they were not to be touched by the destroyer. How precious is that chapter to me in these times! What full security does it give believers, that God will take special care of them, whatever destruction he may send upon unbelievers. I pray him to set his mark upon you; that is, faith: that when men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, you may not be afraid of any evil tidings, but your heart may be established, trusting in the Lord. The God of peace grant you peace always, and by all means! So prays most cordially

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLVI.

Feb. 2, 1793.

My Friend Mr. T.—Mr. N. told me you was expected in town; but I hear nothing of your arrival, and therefore I send my messenger to inquire how you all do. Busy you are, I know, and to some purpose. As far as I can help you on, that this great hurry may not stop you, either in the seeking, or in the enjoying of the best of things, I am in my watch-tower, looking up to the keeper of Israel, for you and yours; for the public prosperity; for our king; and, above all, that our Lord would be pleased to revive his work in our land and day. This is much upon my heart, and keeps me watchful and waiting for what the Lord will answer. As his interpreter, reading his will in his present dispensations, I am to plead in his name for sinners, and to give them warning. He is angry at nothing but sin: and his anger has broke out. His arm is lifted up to strike, and his glittering sword has given a fearful blow, as you may read, Ezek. xxi., from ver. 8 to 18; and yet, it has more to slay before it be put up into the scabbard. No repentance yet; no turning to him who smiteth them. I see daily

greater necessity for keeping in my watch-tower, as it is my office to be found, waiting upon God, humbled for my own sins, and praying and pleading for those who cannot read his present judgments against sin, and against the greatest of all sins—unbelief. In times as bad as the present, Habakkuk prayed, and kept on praying in his watch-tower until he got a gracious hearing, and a favourable answer. A good example for all who follow the steps of his faith: humbling themselves before God for sin, they will find his mercy for themselves; and it may be such a gracious answer as he obtained. This is my present office, in which I am now waiting—in which I hope to meet you often, as a Christian, a minister, a subject. I go no farther in politics than to be found in that blessed exercise of the prayer of faith, described in Psal. cxxii., paraphrased, from beginning to end, in our sermon, Jan. 30; when one of my parish left thirty shillings for the minister, to recommend "brotherly love and charity"—a far better subject than whig or tory.

I am at present pretty well. So well as to preach Sunday last twice, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and hope to be at it twice to-morrow. Tell Mr. K. of my watch-tower: and pray him to preach with earnestness and perseverance. I will give him a text, seasonable always, but now more so. Three Sundays have I been upon it, Isa. lix., last three verses. May he be made very successful in stopping the deluge of sin and unbelief, more than I have been! Pray for your obliged friend and servant in the Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLVII.

May 17, 1793.

Mr. T.—I may be ashamed of myself. A man of your great business, and present hurry, answered me within two or three days; and your letter has lain by me as many weeks. But, if I forget to write, I do not forget to pray. It is my privilege and my happiness to have you on my mind and in my heart—you and yours. I am still in my watch-tower, looking out for the discovery of the Lord's mind and will in his present dispensations. Indeed they are alarming: to me more so; because they do not alarm. The public is still thoughtless and secure, as if no storm was abroad, and no danger near them; though, for certain, some of the heaviest judgments of God are in the earth, calling aloud for repentance. And the professing few, with whom I converse, are not humbled, and pleading earnestly with God for mercy, as the necessity of the times require. And truly it is my own grief that I do not grieve as I ought to do for the affliction of Joseph. Great distresses call for great compassion. We ought to feel very tenderly for the sufferers in these wars—to relieve where we can—and where we cannot, to make our constant requests known to God for them. I lament before him that I have not so much as I could wish of that christian sympathy, which the members ought to have for one another. However, this feeling does me good; for it keeps me in my watch-tower, still waiting upon God, in the prayer of faith: and because I cannot see the appointed time for the end of the vision, I therefore cannot get off my knees. Things grow darker and darker. The way of Providence is still in the deep. What he is doing, we see: but his motives and his ends are out of my sight. How his own glory—how his people's good—how his church's increase—are to be brought about and promoted by these wars, and this distress of nations, must be left to him to unravel. I am forced, which ever way I look, still to be humbled in prayer; in which I hope to be instant, and without ceasing, as long as these troubles continue: and it is not unlikely but they may continue as long as I live: for I have got far, many years, beyond the age of man, and am waiting for the fulfilling of Gen. xxv. 8.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLVIII.

March 20, 1794

My dear Sir.—There was certainly something of intrinsic value, which made the widow's mite more than a pound. Some of that magnifying virtue, I verily believe, accompanied your late letter and the present of wine, which came safe. God be praised that brotherly love continues. May it increase and abound yet more and more. If my prayer be heard, you will feel my Lord nearer and nearer to you, and he himself will speak to your heart—"Fear not: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." This will be a perfect antidote against devils as well as French. Fear them not. Why will not brother K. give us the pleasure of seeing his discourse? My love to him; and try for me once more, what you can do.

I preached two sermons on 2 Chron. xxix. The first was a preparation for the fast, on the first four verses, on the Tuesday, Feb. 25. The occasion, in Jehoshaphat's time, was nearly the same as ours. We are called upon to make use of the same means: and have, from his example, encouragement to hope, through the favour and blessing of God, the same success. Not for our fasting—no, no—nor for our real humiliation: this is not our act and deed; for it is a gift of the Spirit—his special gift—to know ourselves; to feel what we are as sinners, what we deserve for sin, and, being saved sinners, to be enabled to give grace all its glory. This is the experience which goes before, and in, a fast. It is God's preparation—the genuine working of faith; so that the business of the day lies upon believers, whom God has humbled under his mighty hand; who for themselves, and for other unhumbled sinners, are warranted to seek the Lord, and to plead with him, as Jehoshaphat and his people did—and they prevailed. So may we.

Then we came to the fast-day, considering the other part of the history, from ver. 5 to 14, their behaviour on that day, and ours on this day. All of us, who are in our right mind, do as they did. A goodly company of penitent sinners are prostrate at one and the same time before our God. Our petition is for mercy and help. Looking at our enemies, and at our dangers, we use means: but we do not trust in our fleets or armies—our help is in the name of the Lord our God, as ver. 12, 13.

Read what follows, and repent, and pray, and hope on. Their fast-day was turned into a festival. So was ours. We joined in thanks for past, for present mercies, so often bestowed upon this favoured land: and from his loving kindness in Jesus, and for the glory of his own great name, we begged for the continuance of them. And though the 28th of February be over, yet, the fast is not. I am still keeping it daily on my knees, not so much in praying against the French (poor things!) as against sin, mine own, the nation's sin—infidelity—with all its infernal fruits; imploring, for mercy's sake, that God, our God, would not suffer iniquity to be our ruin. And for my own part, I am rejoicing; comparing the word and the providences of God together, I fear no evil. Chastisements may come; but they shall be for correction, and not destruction.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLIX.

Jan. 8, 1795.

My dear Friend.—In a long life—fifty-nine years preaching—I was never laid by so much as this winter, with a severe cough, which is better; but I cannot expect it to be cured while this severe weather continues, if then. But all his dealings with me are well. His goodness and mercy have followed me all

the days of my life; and I give him full credit that he will not leave nor forsake me in this last stage of my journey. You may read his dealings with me, in time past, in the "Life of Faith," and then in the "Walk of Faith." And now my present experience in the "Triumph of Faith."

May my God be with you, according to our motto for 1795. It was, "God with us." You will meditate on it; and it is full of marrow. If you can come at it, you will find that, whatever you take in hand this year, God will make it to prosper. So prays

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLX.

March 6, 1795.

MR. AND MRS. T.—You are one: therefore I put you together in my letter of thanks for a very kind and friendly acknowledgment, in your last, for the present of the "Triumph of Faith." I wish I could give you the grace as well as the book: but it is an inestimable gift, and in better hands than mine. One is the author and the finisher; and with him I am pleading for the increase of faith in both your hearts. The more he gives you, your appetite will increase, and you will wait in the means of his appointing for daily growth. With this waiting faith, I hope, I am getting on: and, as I am nearer every moment to the end of my faith, I thank my God that he vouchsafes me very comfortable and believing views of what lies before me: and I doubt not but he will make me a dying witness for Jesus and his love. Do not cease to recommend me to his mercy, as I trust he will enable me to plead for you to the last.

I have received a very obliging letter from brother K., for which I own myself indebted to him; and am repaying him, as fast as I can, with my prayers, both for himself and for his congregation. If he has good times in his pulpit-work, and sinners hear and repent, and if his church-members grow in number and grace, I am helping him as my Lord enables me; and with him I am more earnest, because we live now in troublesome times, when a refuge from the storm, and a sure covert from danger, should be much sought after and highly valued.

My love particularly to Mrs. T.; and I hope she has some of the experience, as well as the knowledge, of the great doctrines in which the Christian triumphs. Because of her stomach's sake, and her often infirmities, I wish her spirits may be kept up by the reviving cordials of the gospel, and she may never want joy, great joy and peace in believing.

My God be with you! a very precious Jesus to parents, children, Misses H., K., &c. &c. So prays

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXI.

Dec. 13, 1782.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—I have read in a certain book—"As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." You know this is the gospel. Many, thank God! very many times, it has been good news to you and me. And while the blessed sound is joyful in our hearts, it makes all other good news better. So it improved your letter. I received it as one of my covenant blessings. You have your thanks; and God has had his. I am certain, you will not be offended that he had the first and best. The contents of the letter were also every one of them cordials—"As a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul." What

struck me first was your noble collection.* Indeed it was great—in itself valuable—but more so from the motive: I believe Mr. —— gives, and teaches to give from faith. Christian charity springs from Christ received, works by Christ's grace, expects acceptance through Christ's intercession, and, done ever so much, or ever so well, refers all to Christ's glory. So again I come to my point. The good minister and the good congregation have my warmest thanks: but to the Lord Christ be all their praise. Please to communicate this to Mr. K., and farther inform him how much he and his congregation are laid in my heart since I have fully discovered the present state of ——. Oh, what deplorable blindness is there in ministers and people! What a fearful opposition are they carrying on against the Lord and his Christ! What have I told them, what had Mr. —— to tell them, but of the Almighty power, of the infinite wisdom as influenced by the sovereign love of God-Jesus, to save all that come to him, to save them from all their sins and from all their miseries, and also to give them all possible good in earth and in heaven? This is the kindest message of the gospel; and it is sweetly recommended by putting the sinner into the present enjoyment of salvation, as the sure earnest of eternal enjoyment. Mr. —— says, This shall not be preached in my pulpit, because my congregation are offended at it. Lord God, open their eyes! In this view, Mr. ——, you see the important stand which your brother ought to make. The good news shall not be suffered to be proclaimed in churches. Not even Mr. ——, among his friends and relations, shall enter the pulpit. In such circumstances, surely, very much depends upon Mr. ——. How earnest should he be in his work! How faithful in preaching! How careful in his walk! How fervent in closet prayer! How constantly dependent on Christ for the success of his ministry! May the Spirit of the living God keep him—his eye single, his heart chaste, his whole soul engaged in magnifying the person and the work of God our Saviour! I shall be often remembering him and you when I am at Court. The King of kings is extremely gracious to me, and admits me into his presence, and sometimes into his cabinet. When he vouchsafes me such a favourable audience, I will not fail to present a petition for poor S. Let me recommend it to you to do the same at your prayer-meetings. God bless them, and be much with you in that hour. May your pleadings for your ignorant neighbours bring down, both on them and on you, showers of blessings.

Your letter was like the aforesaid cordial, because it brought a welcome account of your family. We had been often saying, I wonder we do not hear from ——. What can be the matter? I am afraid they are not all well. At last comes good news from your family and friends; for which I am very thankful. My blessed Master is very kind in taking care of you. He has followed you with loving kindness all your days. And I pray him, I doubt not but he will, keep you to the end. I had another subject of thankfulness from your letters: they came just time enough to inform me of opening the brewhouse. I was present on the occasion, and I am a witness it was consecrated in form. The trade thereof was dedicated to the Lord; and I trust he will have the whole management of it. Please to tell—that I shall continue my fervent prayers for their success. I hope our God will bless them in better things than these, and will give them the upper as well as the nether springs; and then my joy concerning them will be full.

When you have read thus far, you will begin to think that I write in good spirits: and yet I am under the rod; and it is a very sharp one. Mrs. —— called on Tuesday, and my wife could not see her: indeed, she has seen nobody since we heard the melancholy news of my son's death. It has been to us both a very heavy affliction. He was cut off by a violent flux, at Trincomalee, in the island of Ceylon. I feel as a parent: I am not a stone: but grace has got the better of nature. God supports. God comforts. I have a will of mine own; and by it I would have gladly kept my son; for he was a sweet youth. But I can, from my heart, say, "Not my will, Lord, but thine, be done," whereby I

* For the Bible Society

have the advantage of finding that my faith, being put into the furnace, is true gold. It is, glory be to grace, proved, and improved. When I first saw the letter which brought us the account, I knew the general's seal to it, and, fearing the contents, I looked up for the presence and for the support of my good Master and my old Friend; and he answered me in the words of a great believer, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." He has a right to do what he will with his own: then he enabled me to reply, "Blessed be the name of the Lord:" and I do praise him for giving me some of Job's resignation, that I could use his words with the same spirit. My poor wife has exquisite feelings on this occasion. She wishes not to murmur, nor to displease our good Lord by any hard thoughts of him. But the tenderness of the parent, and to a child who never offended her in his life, occasions risings of grief. The spirit is willing to kiss the rod; but the flesh is weak. In the main, she behaves as I could wish. Her faith is supported; her mind grows quiet and calm; and I doubt not but God will soon bring in his comforts, as well as supports. Pray for us, that we may both profit by our loss.

Again and again I beseech you to pray for

W. Romaine, and family.

LETTER CLXII.

Reading, *July* 30, 1783

My very dear Friend.—Grace with you—and with yours. I very agreeably met with your son in Cheapside. It was a short visit, although sweet. He gave me a good account of you, and of Mrs. T., with her offspring: from whence I got fresh matter of thankfulness to my bountiful Master. He is good, and doeth good. I never think of you without praising him. His favours to you, and to your children, are singular—such as he only can give, and such as even he gives to none but his peculiar. Whenever I look at you, it is with gratitude to him. I have only to wish that he may keep you humble, and you may never rob him of the glory of his distinguishing mercies: and then he giveth more grace. Indeed, he will deny you nothing, if you return him all his praise. I am on a preaching party at Reading, and next Sunday at Wallingford; from whence we go for some days to Mr. S.'s, at Heckfield, near Basingstoke—from thence to my sister Owen's, at Tiverton. Aug. 30, at Mr. Ireland's Brislington, near Bristol; where I am engaged to do duty all the month of September. Whenever we turn homeward in October, Southampton lies in our way: and if it did not, I would take some pains to tell you, in person, how much I am bound to love you, and to bless you. I only write this short note, in answer to your kind inquiry, when it was likely you might see us. Tell my dear brother K. that an old friend of mine had given him very particular directions in every point relating to his ministry. When he and I meet, we may strengthen one another's hands by reading his epistles together. My love to his wife. Will you remember me to Mrs. T., your mother. I have her upon my heart. May my Father be a father to your children—my God their God. And then, but not till then, they will have enough.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXIII.

Bath, *Sept.* 22, 1783.

My dear Friend.—Our good Lord would not have you not to feel for your loss—but to mourn as one that hath hope. We cannot doubt but your mother is with the Lord. And though she had a legal heart to struggle with, and had legal connexions, which cherished a sort of staggering at the promises, yet she

was in Christ. All is safe in his hand. I have heard her again and again commit herself into his keeping: and I am a witness, that her confidence was placed on the right object, on which God himself had commanded her to rest her soul. Sorrow not, therefore, so much for her, as to hinder your gratitude to God for his special kindness to her living and dying. You have lost a mother, a good mother, and I have lost a friend: but neither you nor I would wish her back again. Blessed be God, we are following her—very fast I am—Blessed be his holy name, he supported her faith to the last—so he will ours. Let us improve this providence, as much as we can, to be always ready—that living and dying we may be the Lord's.

I write this from Bath, in our way to Bradford: then for a few days to Frome—from thence to Westgate—the day is uncertain; it may be Oct. 4th, if not, it will certainly be the 6th or 7th. God give us a happy meeting. May he bless you with much of his gracious presence in these trying seasons. I feel much, and pray much for Mrs. T. The Lord give her his supports and comforts. My Christian love to brother K. and family—to Walter, Sam, &c. &c.; friend Wingrove's love to you all, with Mrs. R. and

W. Romaine's.

Our kindest love to Mr. and Mrs. Cadogan. I hope he is suffered in public to extol the praises of our Jesus, and to let me hear them.

LETTER CLXIV.

Jan. 21, 1784.

Mr. T.—I am forced—but it is a willing violence—to be Mrs. R.'s secretary. And having a cover to you, I thought it best to inclose hers, and to take the opportunity of addressing two or three lines to yourself. You are in my debt; but I don't stand upon that. Much of our Lord's love saves us from that trafficking spirit, which returns only what it had received—"Love me, and I will love you; give me a pound, and I will give you a pound again." Oh, no. He teaches us his free love, and that makes us like him. I love you in him—for his sake! and the more I know of you, the more I admire his grace and goodness to you. I have now upon my table a precious token of his love—the Magna Charta of his most precious gifts in which he would assure you and me, how he intends to deal with us in another world, and what we have to hope and fear from him. We never could have known this wonderful secret, unless he had revealed it; and being of inestimable value, we cannot prize it enough, now it is revealed. I have devoted it to the use of your intended dwelling. Let it be the first piece of furniture; as indeed it is the best: and for my sake, let it be the family Bible. If it be his sovereign will—I may be your occasional chaplain, and may have it for my morning and evening lecture. It is Beza's edition, and has the best notes that I ever read: I keep it, till I can conveniently send it. I have great faith in the communion of saints—I wish you had as much—you would be oftener than you are, telling me of your wishes and wants. I have not had any thing for a long time to ask for, when I have been at Court, but about a sick child. My Lord loves children. It is his delight to hear parents dedicate, and friends recommend them to him. I hope he has been gracious to my prayers for your infant—and Mrs. T. says, "All is well."

The times are threatening. What a fearful earthquake in Sicily and Italy! what an alarming one in the political state of England! how has God confounded the wisdom of the wise! the French wanted all the trade of America from us; they have lost all their trade by it. The Dutch followed their steps, and have ruined themselves. Mr. I. thus writes me from France: "We went through Cherburgh—Caen—Tours—Poiters—Angouleme—to Bourdeaux; through all the places we passed, the commercial people are tired of the people of the thirteen

stripes. All that have dealt with them are bankrupts, and they are every where disliked: one only is left at Bourdeaux, and he is not worth a shilling. People's eyes are now open; and they prove my words true, although they expected to enrich themselves by their commerce with these people. It is impossible to describe the aversion of the French to the people of the thirteen stripes. Now you will have them with you; as no credit is to be had elsewhere. I wish they may not complete our ruin. Bankruptcies are here in all parts; no less than 135 at Bourdeaux, in eight months past. Trade is very dull every where; and specie none to be had." Oh what a happiness in such a storm to be safe in the ark! he need not be afraid of any evil tidings, who has embarked his all with Christ. Noah went through such a storm, as never was before nor since, and he feared not; because the Lord shut him in. May that same Lord take you into his care, and keep you and yours, by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation.

I need not tell you, that I am, with usual good wishes, your friend and servant, in our common Lord,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXV.

July 9, 1784.

MR. T.—I have got a very good letter carrier in some things, but not in all. He very seldom gives me proper notice of his departure. He came to dinner to-day, and said he should go to-morrow morning by the diligence: so that I am only left a little of the afternoon to tell you, what I shall not go through in months and years.—How much brotherly love increases, and ripens by experience. He that teaches it, has made it my request, that it may grow on, until it be perfected in his own world. And I ask in faith, nothing wavering. May you feel the heavenly influence, as I do.

I do not forget my promise. The creed which I mentioned is prepared. Every article is settled, and you shall have it in due time. Only give me patience. I am now reading my Bible through from beginning to end. When this is finished, I hope for some leisure, and Mr. T. shall have his share of it. You have a demand on me, and you shall have your due.

I would gladly serve Mr. Mitchell, but Mr. Serle is now at Bath. If Mr. Mitchell goes that way, he will find Mr. Serle at Mrs. Shaw's on the Parade: who I am sure will do any thing for him that he can, if not by a direct application, yet he can put him in a way. God give success.

We are to have a thanksgiving for the peace. On this occasion I rejoice; for I am not a politician. Lord S. I know not, and I shall say nothing about him. My subject shall be about the peace-maker—Jesus Christ.—How he made peace between God and man.—How he keeps it, and carries it on, till it be peace everlasting.—And how he makes peace between man and God, and reconciles them perfectly by his Spirit through the belief of his gospel. And then he reconciles man to man, and enables them to live at peace with one another. Tell brother K. these are the outlines of my sermon on Eph. ii. 14. He is our peace. On which subject he cannot speak too highly of Christ Jesus, the peace-maker, nor yet of the proclamation upon the word—in which all the articles of it are fully settled—nor yet of the security of believing these articles upon the warrant, authority, and commandment of God, and of living in peace with God, when the Lord the Spirit explains and applies them. May it be a great day of thanksgiving with you!

I do not wish to be released from my chaplainship, or from the duties of it. Mrs. T.'s health restored, and getting about again, will keep me still looking up to my good Lord for her—and for her dear John—his name means one that has found grace, may he be acquainted with his name and enjoy the thing. Tell me —how she does—and how my John thrives.

Admiral M. brings this with many inquiries. We have seen much of him in

his present journey; and he has given me great satisfaction, as to the reality of his faith, and to the growth of it: he is indeed one after my own heart.

I commend myself and Mrs. R. to your prayers. We desire very cordially to be remembered to Mrs. T. I long to see Mr. Mitchell. When will he return? Get out of my debt as fast as you can; and pray for

W. Romaine, and all his.

LETTER CLXVI.

Tuesday, Jan. 23.

My dear Mr. T.—I thank you much—I was prepared—my sacrifice of praise was ready—and I offered it up—blessing that gracious, most gracious Lord, who delighteth in mercy. He is, like himself, good, to father and mother, children and friends. Oh call upon all you know, to give him the honour due unto his name. We kept a jubilee last night. Our joyful thanks went up with acceptance. Our supplications for the mother, for the babe, we left with him who, we are certain, will do all for the best. Surely, Mr. T., God's dealings with you have something of peculiar mercy, and call for singular acknowledgments—your person, your wife, your children, your prosperity, in this world, in a better.—Oh what sort of a man should you be, whom God thus loadeth with benefits! I scarce ever think of you, and how whatever you take in hand, the Lord maketh it to prosper, without praying at the same time that he would crown all his favours with true poverty of spirit, and you may walk humbly with your God. *Amen, Amen.* My beloved partner was very hearty in our prayers and praises. She begs every thing kind and friendly may be presented to Mrs. T. from her, as I also do from me. She desires her respects to Sally; wishes her much joy of her little sister; and hopes she will take a great deal of care of her. This is the way to show that she is a good girl, and loves her father and mother.

This is preaching morning; but I stole this time from reading and prayer, to write these few lines. God make them acceptable.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXVII.

Sept. 26, 1785.

My dear Friend.—Our last letters met upon the road; but no angry words passed between them. All was peace. I kept my answer to yours, until I should settle my affairs at home, and, taking my autumn ride, I should see you face to face, and just look upon you by the way. But my former conveyancer, the admiral, has again put it in my power to inform you, that I am still employing my interest for you, and diligent in it. As love directs I am constantly keeping a good look up for Mrs. T. And he takes notice of me, who can make her the living mother of a living child: he has answered prayer on the same occasion, and I do not doubt of his good will or power. We who pray now shall praise soon. I hope to see the mother, and to bless the babe. If God send you a son, will you do me the favour to let me give him a name, expressive of our devoting him to our common Lord? We have seen a great deal of the admiral and Mrs. M., who inform me that my John is a fine boy. God bless him. He lays him upon my heart, so that I have him in special remembrance. He is really a favourite. And I show it in my way. He is a child of many prayers, which I trust will bring down upon him many blessings. When I am often thinking of your great business, your great family, your many connexions, your active spirit seems a peculiar mercy. The Bath quaker is not of my mind. He wants to quiet and still you; as if all religion consisted in a calm. But man is not made for still life, nor can the christian man, in your family, and business, and manifold concerns, be of the quaker spirit. I remember he said once to you, "I wish I could stop that activity of yours." I did not take him up; but I have often

since admired the wisdom of God in fitting you for your place and station. See him in all; and all will be well: be not slothful in business; but begin it and end it with the Lord: then success will follow. You are a witness for this: so am I in my way. I am in my spirit as active as you can be; but I set the Lord always before me. I take him with me to my reading; visiting the sick; public, private ministrations; and it is wonderful what he enables a man to do, when he works for God. For when we carry him all the glory, he still sends us away with more grace. Go on. Be busy. Do all you can for your family; but sanctify all by the word of God and prayer. I believe you do. God knit all our hearts—brother K.—Mrs.—your family—in one bond, never to be broken; no, not by death, that great bond-breaker. So prays your real friend, and constant orator to him,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXVIII.

Friday Morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—Although I have not time to write as I could wish, yet I could not neglect the opportunity; if it was only to let you see, that the doctrines of grace are not unfriendly to good works. Though, by the by, the first good work a man can do, is to receive them, and the next, and so on, is to make use of them. When I would tell you of my good works, it is not great I:—Oh no! It is the sun that makes fruitfulness; so does my Sun, my light and my life. He enables me to wish to be like him; and to be doing what he did, and as he did it: on the same motive and to the same end. My love to you is truly his gift. And what if I should say I show proof it, expecting nothing again? I write, and I write, and write again. This is No. 4 since I left S. I take every occasion to mention you and yours to my gracious Lord, and he is pleased to hear me. The very privilege is its own blessedness. It will only receive some addition, when friend T. shall say, "I am doing the same for you and yours." I believe you are doing it. But do it more, and better, and get out of my debt as fast as you can. It will be a good while first; but if you will let me give you a hint, it may be improved for your sake and mine. Make a conscience of remembering me as often as you are going to ——. Pray one for another—so runs the command—mind how faithful he is to his word. Daniel's three friends went to prayer—they besought God with him, to give Daniel the understanding of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the interpretation: while they prayed, the answer came. In like manner, when Peter was in prison, and to be executed the next day, the church was at prayers all night for his deliverance, and while they were praying, Peter came and told them, "How God had delivered him." Peter spoke very feelingly afterwards, when he said, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver them that are his." Indeed, sir, I want your prayers. I ask them. I have some right to them; and I believe they will do me good. My blessing on all the children. Peace be with you. *Amen.*

Mr. K. is in my Litany for gospel ministers, when I weekly recommend them by name to the Lord of the harvest. I wish he may do the same for me.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXIX.

Jan. 9, 1786.

MR. T.—I begin with thanks. Blessed be his name, who has spared us another year, and is still magnifying his mercy to us and to ours. He is good, and doeth good; for his mercy endureth for ever. And to whom? Who are the objects of his mercy? Wonderful to consider: all, all of them are rebels—and when pardoned, for their best services deserve nothing but hell: and yet he glorifies his grace in such—giving, increasing, multiplying his mercies, both to their bodies and souls—yea, he loadeth them with his benefits. My friend, take

an estimate of them; you have leisure, more than you had at S. I am a had accountant; but you are well acquainted with figures—try what you can do in casting up this sum—"What has God done for you—When did his purposes of doing you good begin—How many mercies have followed you all the days of your life. And when will they stop." Psalm ciii. 17. I believe it will puzzle all your skill in arithmetic, to give the sum total. A better man than you tried, but he failed; and he thought it his wisest part to end the trial with fresh praise, as you may read, Psalm cvi. 1, 2. It is the right working of divine grace to be willing to ascribe all to grace. And instead of getting out of debt by praises, we are more indebted for our praises, and should be more thankful for more thankfulness. When I have acknowledged your Christmas present, it is no payment. It is only saying Mr. T. is very kind to his friends, and I am among them, much beholden to him; that with you is enough: so it is with our God.

I am much indebted to your faithful partner—tell her so I will acknowledge her letter, when I get time. At present I have more work than I can well get through. My curate is leaving me—and I am not yet provided; so that the parochial duty lies heavy on me. But I serve a good master, and I do not complain. He makes my service perfect freedom.

Mr. Serle will by no means hear of money; and I cannot think of accepting so large a quantity for nothing: you will therefore give me leave to make you a free-will offering. I will take care you shall have the half dozen sackfuls in due time—cut ready and prepared for planting half an acre: which in one year will yield you a sufficient quantity for a very great farm. The Lord of the harvest bless the plough.

I have much to say to you about this new year—but my excuse to Mrs. Taylor must also plead with you. When leisure is vouchsafed unto me, I shall look towards P. G. and often before pray my Lord to look there, and to take you and yours under his special care. So prays my good partner, joining heartily with

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXX.

Saturday Morning.

My dear Friend.—Put your mercies and your afflictions together—what comparison between them—how many more mercies than afflictions—and how many mercies in afflictions. Oh for a loud, a louder still, song of praise. Who is a God like unto our God, that maketh affliction do us good and bring himself glory? Let songs of triumph be sounded by all your family, that you have no dark side in God's providences and dealings with you. Let your children and friends join with me in adoring him for what he has done, and praying him not to slacken his hand. In this sweet employment I shall be engaged till Tuesday, the day we hope to see you face to face. It must be a short visit—but let us meet and part good friends, expecting that whatever befalls us, the day will come, when we shall meet and part no more. My beloved partner has a share in all my good wishes to Mrs. T. and family, not forgetting my John. Pray for

W. Romaine

LETTER CLXXI.

Sunderland, *August* 1, 1791.

My dear Friend.—I promised that I would write unto you when I came to the end of my journey: and I do not take up my pen to fulfil that promise, but to tell you, that Mrs. T.'s letter came to us yesterday, forwarded by my son from London, and that the contents occasioned great joy and thankfulness in both our hearts. We were very anxious for Mrs. D., and led to pray much for her, and now our prayers are turned into praises; as he said, "What return shall I make

unto the Lord for all the benefits which he hath done unto me;" what he has done for you, is for me also. He has given me to share in your good; for which I bless his boly name. I shall keep looking up to him for the mother and her son—for the mother, that she may feel how much she is indebted to the loving kindness of her good Lord Jesus—and for the son, that, whether it lives or dies, it may be the Lord's. Mrs. R. desires to thank Mrs. T. for the good news: it was really so, and helped us greatly to increase the thanks of yesterday. I was favoured with an opportunity of recommending my dearest Jesus in the oldest church in England, called Monk Weremouth, which belonged to the venerable Bede, a very favourite pulpit of mine, and from which his precious name has been often, like ointment, poured forth. When I remove from this place to Northumberland, and get a sight of Chevy Chace Hills, which bound England and Scotland, I shall be reminded of an engagement with Mr. T. Till it be fulfilled, I shall be recommending you, Mrs. T. and all yours, to the care and keeping of my Jesus: so will Mrs. R., who begs, whenever you write to Mrs. D., to be most affectionately remembered to her, as does also

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXXII.

BRISLINGTON, *Sept.* 24, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—Although I always look upon you as one highly favoured, yet I could mention a person who has been as graciously dealt with as yourself; and who perhaps may surpass you in the greatness, the number, and the continuance, of divine mercies. I hope to discourse with you upon this subject, and to try which of us can best magnify the special goodness of our God. He surrounds me here with his loving kindness—the family—the place—the weather—Bristol friends—Bristol congregations. I have not a moment, but some of them are saying to me—Here, here is fresh matter of praise. God make me thankful. I wish to bring such a spirit, as I now feel, to P. We leave our friends here Oct. 3d, and staying two days at Bradford, we expect to be at Salisbury the 6th, on Thursday, and meeting your chaise, to arrive Friday, by two o'clock, at P. The Lord Jesus vouchsafe us a happy meeting, that we may help one another forward in our great journey.

My paper will not hold the number of respects and remembrances to Mrs. T. from Mrs. R. accompanied with the salutations of the I.'s, with my own particular good wishes and prayers for every branch of your family. You are all upon my heart, the sick and the well. My Lord, to whom I recommend you, makes his people happy in all conditions; and he often lets them be sick to make them happier. He has a wonderful way of his own, in curing desperate diseases; yea, even of turning death into life. Blessed, blessed for ever, are all they who follow his prescription. Mr. T. you have tried him—go on—trust and be not afraid. If your faith could go as far as his promises, you would find heaven upon earth—the work of faith with power is heaven. May he keep you in it, who is the author and the finisher of the faith. My love to brother K. and family, and to your visitors, if any whom I know. Pray for

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXXIII.

Jan. 4, 1792.
First letter of this year.

MR. T.—We have taken our leave of the last year: farewell 1791, thou wilt return no more. Welcome 1792. Our business now is, to try to profit from the past, and to improve the coming time. When a Christian looks back, every thing calls for his praise. And looking forward, every thing calls for prayer, the

prayer of faith. On these subjects we employed ourselves on New Year's Day. You know it is one of my festivals. We had a great meeting; and, I trust, many true worshippers. Our motto for this year, and our employment through all our years, is, "Grow in grace." 1 Pet. iii. 18. Take the outlines. Grace means favour, free. In our present circumstances, it is the favour of God to the sinners of mankind; said to come from Jehovah, very, very gracious—from the Father, from the Son frequently, and from the Spirit of grace, to teach us, that in the blessed Trinity, all their purposes, words, and works, are favour, nothing but real favour, to believers. To them who feel guilt and wrath in their consciences, it comes like a cool breeze after a sultry day; and it is also compared to dew, which, in hot countries, is very necessary to all the fruits of the earth, and comes upon them most freely, as you may see, Mic. v. 7.

Hence the necessity of it was shown. It is to the soul what breath is to the body. What the dew, and rain, and the shining of the heavens, are to every thing that grows out of the earth; so is grace, as the apostle proves at large, Eph. ii. And this leads us to consider the objects of grace, not so much in the purpose of the Trinity, as in the discovery of it. They are quickened by the Spirit of life, enabled to receive Jesus for their Saviour and their God, and then to live upon his fulness by faith, where they find all grace for spiritual life, growth, and activity; moment after moment, grace for grace.

To learn this lesson in practice is the sound experience of a true believer—grace to pardon, as 1 Tim. i. 14. Grace to subdue sin—grace to purify the heart—grace to regulate the life; these in use are the exercise and the improvement of the grace of Jesus. He takes all from Christ as mere favour, and wishes to grow up into him in all things. May this prosper in your heart. God is teaching it you, as I observe from your last letter; and I see a legal turn in you that would pervert his teaching. Mr. T. the feeling of what you are should not keep you from Christ, but make you live more on his grace, and endear him to you, as the only refuge for your case. If you grow in self-knowledge, it should be your schoolmaster to teach you more of Christ; because the more you know him, the more you will trust him. He will every day give you more reason to do it; and mind, the more you trust him, the more you will love him. His Spirit will make him to your believing heart a precious Jesus; and the constraining love of Christ will lead you to a diligent use of all the appointed means, in which he has promised to meet, and to bless his people. This is our morality; and all this is favour. He giveth grace, and he giveth glory. Saints and angels are, and will be to eternity, worshippers of our Immanuel: so says Peter, "To him be glory now, and through the day of eternity, Amen." My application was, 1. To the graceless. 2. To seekers. 3. To the weak in faith. 4. To the strong. All is from Christ. May this year be a growing year—downwards and upwards—out of self into Christ—from all creature-dependence to more perfect in and on God, his word and Spirit, as a witness to the fulness of Jesus. Oh, Mr. T., this is fine talking; but, believe me, you may as soon create a world, as learn this lesson without almighty grace. Pray, pray for divine teaching. Pray for a growth in grace, that you may loathe and abhor yourself; and, repenting in dust and ashes, may adore the God of all grace. I am on my watch-tower for you, and for Mrs. T. and for all your family, that they may get it, and use it.

Mr. K. will not be offended at my wishing him more grace in his heart, and in his pulpit, and in his family.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXXIV.

Brislington, *Sept.* 13, 1792.

My very dear Friend.—We have settled our plan, and immediately communicate it to your friends at P. When you were at Plymouth, it would have been a little variety, and not at all out of your way, to have come by Tavistock and Crediton to Tiverton,—a charming road. We came from Plymouth that way

And after refreshing us with the sight of you all, you would have got into your road at Honiton again without loss of time. We purpose, God willing, to be at Salisbury on Tuesday evening, Oct. 2d, where you will kindly engage to send for us. It will give us a very great entertainment to have it under your hand, that you are all well, got home safe, have been remembering that dearest friend, who kept your going out and your coming in. We are here at Brislington with our friends, who talk still of returning to France, notwithstanding the great Apollyon reigns there paramount. The seeds have been long sowing, and now they are manifest in their fruits, marked with savage, more than savage, bloodshedding and cruelty. What can Dr. Priestley say now? Here is infidelity with its natural effects. God keep old England! We have too much, by far, of the French principles; only the Almighty can stop their dreadful effects. May we repent and be spared. I am praying, and preaching, and exhorting all I can, to stop the madness of the times. This is a solemn season also with me on my own account. More than half a century ago, I was ordained to be a witness for Christ in this month of September. Looking backward, every thing I can remember covers me with shame. Doing so little for such a Jesus—grudging to be laid out and spent for him—and, when he did vouchsafe to make use of me, so ready to take his glory to myself. I verily stand amazed at his infinite patience and kindness in all his dealings with me. I feel I must lie at his footstool, and be content (but he must make me so) to be in his debt for all things that belong to life and godliness: according to Mr. Jones's dying triumph, "A sinner saved, a sinner saved."

All here salute you. Mrs. R. in a particular manner to Mrs. T. and yourself, with your faithful friend in our dearest Lord,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXXV.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I have had to preach twelve times in fourteen days—— and rather not well, till preaching comes, and then I get better. No master like mine. His service is perfect freedom. Our meditation concerning him on new year's day, was on one of his names, namely, Melchisedec. From comparing what is said of him in Genesis, and in the 110th Psalm, with St. Paul's comment upon both these passages in Hebrews vii, it seems to me most certain that Jesus Christ is the person spoken of in the Old Testament. The apostle has explained the word for us, and says it means, "the King of righteousness." Oh what a blessed name! There being none righteous, no, not one, he vouchsafed to be "the Lord our righteousness." He wrought it out for us, and applies it in us. He sends his Spirit to convince us that we want it, and to enable us to trust in his—to plead it in the conscience, and to rejoice in it in the heart, and to be filled with the blessed fruits (as Phil. i. 11) of it in our lives. Consider, he is the King of this saving righteousness—a great King—Jehovah—King of kings—the Creator of heaven and earth—the God of providence, who upholdeth all things by the word of his power—the God of the fathers, worshipped under the tabernacle and temple dispensation—and the God whom Christians worship, it being their distinguishing character, to call upon the name of the Lord, as you may see Acts ix. 14; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 22. May he reveal himself all the year to you as your righteousness: and this is the proper work and office of faith—with all the confidence of your heart to depend upon him, so as to enjoy peace with God—love to God—and loving obedience. Remember, this year will call for much faith: and you will not exercise it as far as he warrants you. He bids you cast all your care upon him: for Mrs. T.—for children—for business—for death—for eternity: you cannot lay too much upon him—the government of all worlds is upon his shoulders. O precious faith! He is my King. He rules in my heart He has set up there a throne of grace. He keeps under the rebels, and keeps me willing to follow him wheresoever his providence leads. Mr. T., I beg for you, and beg yourself, for more trust in the Lord our righteousness. The you

may so grow in grace, as to thank God, who always causeth you to triumph in Christ. Pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXXVI.

Dec. 5, 1793.

My Friend.—A goodly company of you met together. Peace be with you, family and guests. You say, I am in your debt—so I wish to be; and so I must be for some time. I have set down in earnest to finish the "Triumph of Faith;" and am now transcribing it for the press. It has grown so voluminous, having been in hand ever since 1771, that I have resolved to throw aside all my papers, and write only just what I myself am at present, an old believer. I am in haste to get it finished, before I finish my course, which is very near run out. Soon I shall enter on my 80th year, and soon be no more here. I therefore leave my experience in the former volumes of the "Life of Faith" and of the "Walk of Faith" in this concluding treatise, which contains what I am still learning and living. Some years ago, I published a volume of Dr. Smith's portraiture of old age, explaining the 12th of Ecclesiastes. Now am made to feel the symptoms therein described; which is practical knowledge, and the truest comment upon the Bible when the Holy Spirit writes it on the heart, and brings it into use and experience in the life. Now I have told you my present state—I am as busy, in my way, as you can be in yours. The preparing for the press is not the whole of my employment. I would be found much in prayer for direction, for assistance, &c.; and, above all, for a blessing from God: without which, the book may as well be burnt as see the light. Herein you, and my friends with you, can help me much; and you will, if brotherly love continue. I beg, for my Lord's sake, that you would plead with him for his direction—his assistance—his blessing, on my poor attempt to spread his matchless fame, and to encourage believers to trust him more and better.

Take this excuse: for it is a true one. Oh that your account of Mr. T. may be matter of fact: I rejoice and am thankful.

May you take Mrs. T. home as well as I wish her. M., I find, is to learn a little longer in our Lord's school: may he prove a good scholar till faith and patience have done their perfect work. My love to Mr I. He is in my debt, and can get out of it when he will. I wish him one of your blessed gospel-winters. Mrs. I and her dear children are in my litany: so are yours. If you have any regard for me—remember my "Triumph of Faith." Pray that I may *live* it, and, in due time, *die* it. So wishes my good partner, to you, and yours, and all your guests. In the holy bonds of Christian love, I am, truly, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXXVII

Jan. 1794.

My dear Friend.—May this be the happiest year of your life, and Mrs. T. and all your children. He can make it so, in whose hands are your time. And he can do it in a marvellous way. He can bring in comforts, by taking away comforts, and I hope he does. Mr. I said in a letter, "You have heard of the melancholy death of Mr. D." I had a letter from S. about a fortnight after, which made no mention of it; so that I did not know for certain how it was, till I met Mr. B. who showed me a letter from you, giving an account of it. You see here is another breach in your family—a loud warning to you all, young and old, to be ready; that is, take care that ye be found in Christ, living and dying.

Our motto was this year "The God of hope." Rom. xv. 13. I purpose to give you the substance of my observations some other time. Last week I was ena-

bled to preach eight sermons—and this week seven. It is better to burn out than to rust out. If Mr. K. does not preach so often, may he do it more fervently, and with more success. I can wish you nothing greater, than the continual experience of Rom. xv. 13. May the power of the Holy Ghost show what great thing, exceeding great, you have to hope for from God in Christ, and put you by faith into the present enjoyment, Mrs. T. and all your children. So prays

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXXVIII

MY GOOD FRIEND.—I give you the earliest intelligence of our motions, in which you are pleased to interest yourself. It is our year to visit my sister at Tiverton, to whom we go the beginning of July; afterwards, I have taken the care of Mary Portchurch, in Bristol, for four Sundays. After which, I hope God will open a way for us to see our friends at P., and to help one another forward in the best things—which will be (if all things favour) in October, and of which I shall inform you again and again in the course of the summer. May our hearts meet often in the centre of union.

Your late sickness had a voice—it spake—and you heard it say—" In the midst of life we are in death." How short is life—how uncertain! How certain, infallibly certain, is death! How necessary is preparation for it! How dangerous the least delay! How comfortable a well-grounded hope of safety in death, and of joy beyond it. Mr. T. you know these things—Oh, for more practical knowledge, and lively experience. There is an antidote against the sting, ay, and against the fear of death—an infallible cure—true faith believes, and takes it. The conscience feels the sovereign virtue—the blood of the Lamb cleanses it from all sin: and when guilt is gone, the heart is saved from every enemy it had reason to fear, and is entitled to every blessing that God has promised. It is upon the ground of this warrant, and nothing else, (pray mind that,) that any man can look forward to death and judgment, with a hope full of glory and immortality. What said the blessed company of Old Testament martyrs? All these died in faith: to whom the New Testament church in perfect unison replies—Thanks be to God, who giveth us also the victory over the law, over sin, and over death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Mr. T., you have their faith—God help you to make good use of it! If you live long, you must expect trials: the prospect which faith opens into the other world, will marvellously support and comfort you under them. God has given you many, many temporal blessings; this faith will improve them, and exalt them into spiritual and heavenly mercies: it will teach you to sit loose to them—God in them, and not they alone, will be your portion. You will taste his goodness in them; and when he calls you to leave them, you will be—he will make you—as ready to leave them, as a poor beggar would be to fall asleep, if the Almighty had promised that he should awake a great emperor: our Jesus is this Almighty—He has promised to be our shepherd through life and death. May he magnify his tender care over you, by making you feel happy in him, as happy as the 23d Psalm promises he will make you.

I know you will excuse my long sermon: but truly I am so sensible of the importance of preparation—the dreadful danger of delay—that I could not help thanking my God, who had spared you. This sickness, I trust, was for his glory in your good—as Lazarus' was; but Lazarus died afterwards. May you live to die as Lazarus, and be where he is now. I assure you, the christian hope has its present harvest of blessings. May you enjoy them abundantly, through life, and for ever and ever.

Mrs. T. is in my eye, and in my heart. What I wish you, I also wish her. She carries about with her a constant monitor, a weak and crazy body; and he says to her, " Be ye also ready." I know she believes: and whatever bad nerves may suggest, and they are terrible enemies to the comforts of Christ, yet he is on her side; and he will prove himself, in every time of need, to be her Saviour and

her God. She is persuaded I make use of my interest with him for her, and for all she loves, especially my John, whom God bless. B. K. gave me yesterday a good account of his father—I was in prayer for him—and have now been giving of thanks: may he be preserved, for the sake of his church, his family, and his friends. Mrs. R. desires the kindest things may be said for her to Mrs. T. and all true and real. We join in constant prayer for you, and hope to join soon with you; and it warms my very heart and soul with feelings inexpressibly blessed, that I hope, ere long, to join all my P. friends, in the praises of God and the Lamb, which will never, never end, but grow better and better to all eternity.

W. ROMAINE.

To Mrs. T.

LETTER CLXXIX.

Nov. 28, 1785.

MY DEAR FRIEND, MRS. T.—I was interested greatly in the birth of John—and, if I remember well, I sent you on that occasion, some reflections to stir up your gratitude. My heart has been with you on the present mercy, for which I joined in prayer, and now join in thanksgiving. You will not be offended, that I send you what has been upon my mind lately, and what I trust has been also upon yours—may he, who commands the blessing, make it the means of exciting and increasing the praises of your heart. I suppose you in your closet, and in the presence of God.

Oh, how many are my mercies: and these new mercies are calling for a new song of praise.

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

For surely his mercy and goodness have followed me all the days of my life.

Oh what was I, that God should set his love upon me before time, and in time call me to the saving knowledge of his Son, whom to know aright is life eternal?

And what am I even now, since I have felt something of the power of his precious gospel?

Why me, Lord? what was I, what am I, that I should be chosen, and called, and accepted in the Beloved? Not unto me, in the least, not unto me, but unto thy sovereign grace be all the praise.

Oh help me to ascribe unto thee, the glory due unto thy great name: for I am surrounded, I am loaded with thy benefits.

All thy dealings with me show forth thy loving kindness; and in temporals, as well as spirituals, I am singularly favoured.

I cannot count my many, many outward blessings, nor can I be thankful enough for a spiritual use of them.

When I survey my situation in life, my kind relations, my friends and substance, my house and servants, they all proclaim the bounty of heaven to my soul.

Thanks be to thee, thou that delightest to do good! I see thy hand, I taste something of thy love in all my enjoyments.

I thank thee for thy gifts—I use them by thy grace—and I bless thee, that they are in any measure sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Oh how are my mercies increasing! they abound in number—in quality they grow more excellent; for I get two in one—first a mercy, and then a thankful heart to acknowledge it, which is grace for grace.

Let me, deeply impressed, lift up my heart to bless the Lord God, for my husband, my children, and especially for my new-born son—whom I devote to thee, and to thy service. Oh, be with him through life! Thou knowest my heart and the feelings of a mother: let the bowels of thy tender mercies in Christ be towards him. I ask nothing more for him—and thou wouldst not have me ask any thing less—than that thou mayest be his portion, and his exceeding great reward.

And now, Father of my mercies, who hast been the guide of my youth, into thy care and keeping I commit me and mine.

Here I am at P——, a miracle of thy goodness: let me live here a life of praise—and whatever blessings thou givest, crown them with a humble and a thankful heart.

O let me never be suffered to rob thee of thy glory; but help me to give it all, where it is due, in life, and death, and to all eternity—to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

When this shall be completed, W. R. hopes to be in company, and to join in an everlasting Hallelujah.

Ay, and before too: the well-grounded expectation of this feeds and nourishes our gratitude at present. Already I feel some of its heavenly influence, and my design in writing, is to suggest something which may give you a new relish of it. Though we cannot enjoy so much, nor praise so well, as our elder brethren, who are now round the throne, yet surely we may taste and see, as well as they, how gracious our Lord is; and although they are banqueting at the marriage supper, yet we, the friends of the bridegroom, are invited to rejoice in our Lord as well as theirs, and we are commanded, too, to rejoice in him always: and again I say, rejoice.

My dear Mrs. T., I know your weak frame, and your poor nerves—I make allowances for your bodily infirmities; yet it is upon account of these very things that I would try to stir you up the more. You want fresh encouragements to believe, and by believing not only to go on your way, but also to be able to go on rejoicing. Happy am I, if my good master pleases to bless any thing I write to the increasing of your faith and of your joy in him. Be assured, the more you trust him, the greater reason you will find to trust still more: and when you are quite satisfied that you are safe in his hands, as he warrants you to be, then will your love to him abound; for faith first worketh love, and then worketh by love, keeping the heart warm, in its grateful attachment to a precious, precious Jesus. May this be your portion! So prays

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CLXXX.

May 12, 1788.

MRS. T.—Tuesday, one o'clock—just come from church. This is my day for preaching to young people: we had a congregation of at least two thousand children; and, what made me wish I had seen all your dears before me, was that my Lord might have laid his hands upon them, and blessed them; for he was with us of a truth. He repeated Mark x. 13. Our text was Psalm cxix. 9. Our nature is defiled—the fountain is pollution; so are the streams. Thoughts vain—play foolish—tempers rebellious and headstrong—end is destruction. Our Jesus is almighty to save us. He can teach the ignorant, wash the filthy, pardon the guilty—subdue every bad temper, and set in, and keep in, the way of life and salvation. He invites young people to come to him: promises to give them better things than play or pleasure: makes his promises good—gives exceeding great and precious things, and these for ever. Many intreaties were used, and much prayer for success, that the work of the day might prosper. He did his own will: to him be all the glory.

My kind love to Mr. T., and thanks for his kind letter. God has prospered, God does prosper, God will prosper, him. So prays

W. ROMAINE, for him and his.

LETTER CLXXXI.

Mrs. T.—You gave me great pleasure in your last letter. I am much beholden to you. I speak not after the manner of men, but from my heart. I feel thankfulness: It is no bad wish to pray you may feel as much: for I am sure you have as much, if not more, reason. You have a friend who has done wonders for you, and who expects nothing in return, but an humble acknowledgment: and that also he must give you. I often think of his goodness, and bless him for you. If he took away a parent, he was better than a father. He himself brought you up, and made your guardians so careful of you, and so kind to you. He sent you your husband, and put you into such circumstances, that your heart cannot wish for more. Look back, Mrs. T., look round, and see whether our God hath not dealt bountifully with you. May all his temporal mercies stir up and increase gratitude in your soul. But what are these, though they be great, and many, and undeserved, compared to his special favours? I knew he loved you: but I am happy to have it under your hand. Whatever Almighty love can do, he will perform. Oh what a debt do you owe him—for his unspeakable gifts—himself—What a sum is that! His Spirit, to unite your spirit to Jesus—Oh what an infinite mercy! And to abide with you, to keep you in union, and to establish communion with God your Saviour; that in his fulness you may find and enjoy all the blessings of the Father's love—his Father, and in Jesus your Father. By what gracious providences has he led you to this experience! Your relations, friends, acquaintance, and education, all kindly overruled by him to train you up in the good old way. Your present settlement, the family you are in, the ministry you sit under, Oh what mercies! The Bible opened to you—the promises credited, put in suit, applied. Prayer a delight, in some measure—praise at times very encouraging—a humble walk, as I can witness. My dear friend, raise up your heart, and bless his holy name. If your heart be cold, like the weather, warm it at his love: for all his gifts are but a little earnest in hand. At present, your best is but a foretaste. Look forward, and see what an estate you have in reversion. True, it is only in promise; but that credited is as good as any freehold. Trust, trust him, be not afraid. It is yet but a little, very little while, and he will put you into full possession. And I hope to see it, and join your eternal song of praise to God and the Lamb. Your friends die. The year is just dead. I am tottering over the grave: but he says to me, and he keeps up my spirits, "Because I live, ye shall live also." In this confidence, come what may, I go on my way rejoicing. Prav for

W. Romaine.

To one of his Sisters, &c.

LETTER CLXXXII.

My dear Sister.—I always loved you as my sister, now I love you much more than ever. I trust in God you will soon stand related to me by a more closer and dearer bond than nature can tie. Only go on, and you will be happy. God has begun his work, let him finish it. All my prayers shall be offered for your speedy experience of his pardoning love; and, until you taste of it, let me entreat you to be earnest in the careful use of all the means of grace: be much in prayer, in reading, and meditating on the word of God; but then take care that you build not on these duties. You are not to fancy, that any thing you can do, is able to justify you in the sight of God. Your justification is a free act of God's grace without works.

W. Romaine

LETTER CLXXXIII.

My dear Sister.—I saw Mr. R. last Sunday, who gave me a very pleasing account of your growth in grace. It was said formerly, that the distinguishing love of God chose two of a city, and one of a family; but now what reason have we to magnify and to exalt the love of our God, who has been so exceedingly gracious to our family? I trust, he has greater blessings for us all, even in this life, than we have yet received. Only do you wait upon him, and be found in those ways wherein he meets his people, and he will carry you on safely and sweetly to the end of your journey: it is but a little way, and a short time, and we shall be at home; so that we ought every moment to be pressing forward; and may God keep you from being weary or faint in your mind! You have afflictions and troubles in the way, and so have all God's children. You have them, because you want them. You could not grow in grace without them. How could you take up your cross, and deny yourself daily, if you had not daily troubles? And it is the exercise of faith to bear them, and to believe that God deals them out by number, weight, and measure. You have not one pain more than you stand in need of. And farther, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If we do but attain to this glory, it signifies very little by what way we come to the attainment of it. Think on these things, and, through the blessing of God, they may help to make you see and feel, that the way of suffering is the royal way to the kingdom.

My tenderest duty waits upon my dear mother. I hope God will finish his work in her, before she goes hence. I trust we shall meet once more in this world; and I doubt not but we shall meet, where we shall part no more. I send inclosed, a little piece of Mr. Mason's. I hope God will bless it at this time, as it comes seasonably, and particularly to my sister M., who will, I expect, be able to read it with profit, about the time it reaches you.

Why do you want so much to have texts, and pieces of sermons? Have you not the Bible? One word of it is worth a volume Read and pray much; and God will do more for you than all his ministers can.

I commend you to God, and to the riches of his grace, praying him to do for you all exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think. I remain, your loving brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXXXIV

July 18, 1758.

My dear Sister.—I can now acquaint you, with great thankfulness to my good God, that my wife is brought to bed; she had a pretty good time, and has a boy likely to live. In a little time, I hope to be able to get my churches provided for, and then I shall inform you when I shall set out for the north. In the mean time, pray for us, and especially for me, that I may come unto you, with the demonstration of the spirit, and of power: and if God opens a door for me, it certainly shall be so. There seems to be a great hungering and thirsting after the word in most parts of the country; I pray God some persons may be sent to break the bread of life, and to distribute the waters of comfort to them. The work of God still prospers in this city, which is the only token we have for good—for it shows that God, in the midst of wrath, remembers mercy; and if his wrath should increase, may the work of God prosper in your soul and mine, that if he should come to punish, and to destroy this sinful nation, he may find no sins in us to punish, all being covered with the Redeemer's blood.

I hope to find my mother better, to whom give my duty, and my love to my sisters. May you all grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: so prayeth your friend and brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXXXV.

My dear Sister.—I thank you for your kind letter. I think since I left St. Olave's I have more business than before: always some call to visit the sick or other duty; but not so much taken up, as to hinder me from writing every post, if I thought it would be any comfort to my mother. If she is waiting on God, he will not leave her. If she is desiring the fulfilment of the promises, God cannot deny himself: his word cannot be broken: he will give her her heart's desire, even himself to be her God, and her everlasting reward. My wife has been very ill; thank God, she is now pretty well recovered, and sends her duty to my mother, and her love to you all. The children are well.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

I can say nothing yet about coming down. I have had sad troubles at St. Dunstan's with the new vicar. He will let none preach for me without a license, which puts me to great inconvenience: but all is governed by One, who knows what is best, and does what is best, for his own glory and his people's good. I desire to be more and more thankful to God, for his mercies both to me and to you. How can we thank him enough, for that so many of us are seeking happiness in eternal things, while so many are content with the happiness of time and sense? How can we do too much to show our gratitude? Oh, let us do, or suffer any thing our God calls us to! Surely, the time is short, and this short suffering is the way to an eternal weight of glory, &c.

W Romaine.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

My dear Sister.—I am glad to see your handwriting. I received your bill, and have sent you two books stitched in blue paper. You know, I suppose, why we did not all come as we intended; my wife is poorly: as soon as she is any thing better, I hope to see you. I send you inclosed two letters of Mrs. Love's, the most extraordinary I ever saw—Her faith was as strong as Abraham's, in offering up his only son. May God give you and me the same faith! And I doubt not but he will, if he calls us to the like trials; for I am certain, I find it by experience, that he gives his people strength for their day. Religion is in a very flourishing state among us. We have great additions of people, and several ministers lately come out. This is indeed a day which the Lord hath made. Oh that I may find him present with his divine efficacy, when I come down! Help me with your prayers, both before and when I am there, that the work of the Lord may prosper in my hands. Yours most affectionately,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

My dear Sister.—I have been very poorly a long time, but, thank God, I find sickness better for me than health; and I am sure, when the Lord sees best,

I shall be restored to my former state. The main thing is to be secure of our eternal health; of that I have no doubt. Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift. I believe not one tittle of the word can be broken, but that to the uttermost it shall be fulfilled, even to me. This gives a relish to every thing God sends; because, whatever comes from him, comes always sanctified, and generally sweetened. What the enemy attempts against our peace, God overrules to the establishing of it; and his temptations against our graces are made to strengthen them. This is my experience; I hope it is yours. Rejoice in having an Almighty friend. Be comforted in him. What signifies all that Satan, or the world, or our own hearts, can do against his power? We are his. That is enough. He will keep us. He will strengthen us. He will justify us. He will sanctify and glorify us. Yea, he will do this for such as we are. Oh let us then fear nothing but displeasing him; and while this holy fear is in our hearts, we shall go on safely and sweetly homewards. There may we meet, even in our Father's kingdom, and inherit all that Jesus purchased for us!

My best respects, and duty, and prayers, attend my dear mother. I have not the least uneasy thought about her. She has God's promise. This she shall find. The Lord keep you and all friends.

W. ROMAINE

LETTER CLXXXIX.

DEAR SISTER.—Your letter gave me greater joy than I can express. I hope all will soon be well with your soul. You may examine yourself by these following rules, and I hope God will give his blessing to them.

First, look back and see from whence your conviction of sin arose. The scripture says, true conviction must come from the Holy Spirit; and when he is come, says Christ, he will convince the world of sin. It is his business and his office; and, when he acts in it, conviction has these properties different from the conviction of natural conscience. It respects not so much acts of sin, as the sin of our nature; that entire pollution and depravity of the faculties of soul and body, which render us by nature children of wrath. Again, it is deep; it goes to the bottom of the heart, and lays open all the lurking places of sin. Further, it is lasting, it continues its hatred and opposition to all sin, until it be not only seen in the heart, but also driven out of it.

Secondly, if, after examining your conviction by these rules, you find it right, and peace and joy begin to arise in your conscience; if it be the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit, it will make you continue to hate sin, and every thing sinful. It will leave you more in love with God than it found you. You will love prayer more, and will have a freedom and liberty in it which you had not before. You will love God's word more, and will understand more of it, being enabled, by his grace, to find instruciton in it, suitable to all your spiritual wants. My meaning in all this is, if the convictions have brought you to Jesus Christ, you will know it by its fruits. You will find yourself grow in grace, and more in earnest about the salvation of your soul.

Thirdly, examine your growth in grace by this rule. We remember the sin which did so easily beset us; look at that; see whether you hate it entirely, and whether you have entirely got the mastery over it. God has promised that you shall have grace to help in time of need. Apply to God for the fulfilling of this promise; and be more concerned about this grace, which you always want in time of need, than about sensible comforts; because, in the one you may be deceived, but in the other you cannot. My dear sister, you have chosen the better part. The kingdom of heaven is worth millions of worlds. May God enable you to seek until you attain it. My prayers attend you.—Remember me to my sister.—My duty to my dear mother. Adieu.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXC.

Grace be with you, my dear sister, and with my dearest mother; thanks for your kind letter. I am glad to observe the spirit of it. While Christ is dear and precious, all will be well. Lay him as the foundation, and build all upon him; then foundation and building will never, never fall. Oh, my dear sister, you cannot make too much of him. Faith, resting on him, finds a free, full, eternal pardon for all sin; and faith, living upon him, finds power over sin, deliverance from temptations and enemies; and, by and by, sin shall be no more, but only heaven and glory, the purchase of the Saviour's blood. The believer's motto is, "Christ all, I nothing." For he cannot live upon Christ, unless he feel his want of him. More wants, more faith, As they increase, so must faith, that the believer may get a supply, and the Saviour may get the glory. May that precious Saviour, eternally, infinitely precious, be your keeper! May you love him more than I do; live more upon him than I! May my dear mother get established in him! Jesus keep you! Jesus bless you! My dear sister, yours in him,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXCI.

My dear Sister.—I have been waiting to answer your kind letter, with something satisfactory about my outward affairs; but, not being able as yet to do it, I could not put off my writing any longer. You tell me good news indeed; which makes my heart glad and thankful. Oh, what reason have I to bless the good and gracious Lord, who is still infinitely loving to me and mine! He hath brought me once more to St. Dunstan's, and through many miracles of mercy which I have experienced both in my body and soul for these last six months. Now I can sit down, and, looking back, adore and bless his rich grace; in all things, and for all things, I can give him thanks. Nothing have I to mention all the day long, but mercy upon mercy; great measure, pressed down, and running over. Every moment brings some increase of mercies to body, or soul, or children, or friends, or substance; and leads me to magnify the goodness of my dearest Lord. He hath showed himself, by numberless acts of grace, so entirely my friend, that he has enabled me to trust all my mercies in his hands. He knows what is best for me; and I am sure he will give it me. Thus he is glorified, and I am happy. You have heard of my being a candidate for a church in the city. My friends put me up; and I am as if I were not a candidate, for I have scarce a thought about it. One wish I am sure I have not but that Christ's will may be done. Would he employ me in a larger field than I have at present, "Here am I, Lord, send me." If he would have me to stay, and work where I am, I am content. Be thou, Lord, but with me, then I shall be and do what thou pleasest. Thus have I cast all my care for this and all other things upon the Lord, knowing that he careth for me. You will suppose, then, that I am happy: and so I am; very, very happy. I have got the pearl; let them take the field that will. For one end and purpose only do I now live. I see in this pearl of great price, the infinitely rich Jesus, far more wisdom, righteousness, holiness, strength, and blessedness, than I have yet attained; and I hunger and thirst for more, still more. I know it is all mine; and therefore I keep pressing forward. In what method, and on what motives, I do this, I will tell you.

1. As to myself, I find, that to this moment, I never go to Christ for any thing, until I feel the want of it: so that, the more wants I have, the more I make use of him; for which reason I am not afraid to discover what is in myself, be it what it will, because it does not drive me from Christ, but leads me to him. By this means self is kept down, and Christ is exalted. For,

2. As to Christ, I grow in the knowledge of him by finding every day more, that without him I can do nothing. Hereby my faith is increased, and I live in

a more settled dependence upon him. My hopes are enlarged, and laid up with him within the veil, which is the death of worldly hopes and fears: and my love to him abounds from daily experience of his rich love to my soul, which crucifies and kills the creature-love.

For these two things I am pressing forward, desiring to be more emptied of self, and to live more out of self; that I may be filled more with Christ, and live more upon his fulness; and this I am sure is the way to be holy and happy. Now at Christmas, I would wish to feel in myself what a lost and eternally miserable creature I should have been without Christ. Here lies the ground of dependence on him, and thankfulness to him. That believer will spend the best Christmas, who is most experimentally acquainted with his own ruined nature, and thereby knows what a mercy it is, that God should take our nature, to save us from all the sins and miseries of it; and, being thus saved, what will he be doing all the Christmas, but praising and blessing that dear Jesus, to whom he is infinitely, and will be eternally, indebted? May nothing but praise come from your lips, and mine, and my dear mother's! May she know that Jesus was born for her, and be glad now in his salvation. I am, yours in everlasting bonds,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXCII.

LAMBETH, *July* 7, 1764.

GRACE and peace be with you always, my dear sister, and always increasing; this I heartily wish and pray for, both for you and myself—Indeed, it is all we want, to partake of the grace of God, and to have peace, the sweet sense of it, ever upon our minds. This ruling in our souls is heaven upon earth; and this promised is enjoyed by believers. "The peace of God rules in their hearts, alway, by all means." Of this I am a witness for God. Glory be to sovereign grace. I am obliged to go down to Brighthelmstone before I come into the North, so that I shall not be with you, until the first week in August; but you shall hear from me again, before I come down.

I asked your curate to accept of some of Lady Buchan's legacy—he seemed willing, and although I have not received the money, yet you may pay him ten guineas; and inform him, that it is part of what I intend him of this legacy. Other matters I refer till I come. You need take no receipt of him, only pay him (the first opportunity) the money.—I am but poorly in health: the weather is so hot, and our congregations so large, that I am quite faint; but to-morrow is my last day. A little air and exercise will, I hope, set me up again: but it matters not; Christ is mine, and he knows how to order my affairs. He can bless sickness as well as health; nay, he does bless all things to his people. So I find. I have nothing to fear on his part, though every thing on my own. I am going into a den of lions. Pray for me, and pray for my journey down, that it may be to God's glory. My wife and children join with me in duty to my dear mother, and love to you. I am, for that precious Jesus' sake, your loving friend, and affectionate brother,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXCIII.

LAMBETH, *Sept.* 29, 1764.

MY DEAR SISTER must not accuse me of neglect. I have been about my Master's business, preaching at Bath, at Bradford, at Powsey, &c. and being now returned to London, to preach three times to-morrow, I could not help giving you an account of my matters, and of my dear Jesus' great goodness to me. He has travelled with me, and been with me of a truth. Oh what have I experienced of his love, since I left you: he has not only let me taste that he is precious, but he has made me also live upon his grace. He lets me have nothing but love, free,

rich love, and my very physic is given by, and tastes of, his love, and always works greater love in me to him; so that Jesus is become exceeding dear to me. His cross endears him, as well as his crown. Indeed his cross is full of diamonds within, as his daughter (that is, every true believer) is all glorious within. But why do I speak thus to you? Is not that precious Immanuel lovely in your eyes? Yes, I know he is; and I speak of him to you, to encourage you still to go on expecting to receive every day of his fulness more than you received yesterday. Do not stop; do not think you have attained all he has to give; but keep pressing on—still there is more wisdom; you know but in part; still more growth in knowledge of Christ's righteousness, it is infinite and everlasting; still more holiness in Jesus' fulness than any one living has yet received, because not one on earth loves as they do in heaven; still more strength, because every day is to bring us more sensible of our weakness, that we may be strengthened more by him, and that his strength may be perfected in our weakness. The Lord give you his mind and Spirit, that you may be growing up into him in all things. You have great reason to bless the Lord Christ, for his goodness to you in the North; but he has a dear people, and a numerous one too, in the West, and growing. It will be a vast multitude when they all get together; and that puts me in mind of my dear mother, who, I am sure, will not be wanting, when the Lord counteth his jewels. Mine and my wife's duty to her. The children are well, we hear. Remember us kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Callender, and Mr. and Mrs. Parker. Jesus be with you all. I am, for his sake, yours most affectionately,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXCIV.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 6, 1765.

My dear Sister, whom I love in the Lord, peace be with you! Although I have nothing particular to communicate, yet I could not help writing on the old subject, which will never be exhausted.

While there are angels to sing, and saints to shout, to shout aloud for joy, they will be telling of the love of Jesus to all ages. How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty! matchless both; as I can witness for one. I am loaded with his benefits. If I should begin to number them, they are more than I am able to express. To my body, my substance, my children, my soul, all, all is mercy; and mercy, too, that endureth for ever. May the God of all mercy secure to himself, from me, all the glory that is his due. You ask about Blackfriars; the cause stands still: it was to have been heard the first day of this term; but the lawyers were not ready. They begged for more time, and my Lord Chancellor granted it to them. When it will come on now, I cannot tell. But I can tell much of Jesus's goodness to me. He does not let all this waiting time be lost. He is teaching me to make up all my happiness in himself, and is kindly cutting off one and another view of rest, short of him, who is our only rest. And because I am a very dull scholar, and the master is meek and lowly, he therefore bears with me, and takes a great deal of pains to instruct me in my lesson. I think this is one great end and aim in all his dealings with his dear people. He would have them to trust him, to live on him, and to love him, always. But how can he do this so effectually, as by bringing them off from trusting to, living on, and loving, other things? He would take these out of the heart, in order to make room for himself. He is a jealous God. He will not sit on the same throne with idols. If there be one still in the heart, it must come down.

The more we cleave to it, he will put forth the more of his strength to divorce us from it. While he is in much mercy doing this, the foolish heart thinks Christ is hurting it, and intending it evil, when he means nothing but good, and is taking the best means to bestow good. He is removing the shadow, to make way for the substance. He is deadening the soul to sensual enjoyments, that it may be thereby more alive to God, and fitter for closer communion with him. Graciously is he teaching me these blessed lessons. What he takes most from

me, I gain most by. For I am an immense, yea, an eternal gainer, when he fills up with himself the want of that which he takes away. Whatever brings me this blessing, I can welcome it. Welcome the loss of Blackfriars. Welcome every cross which brings me nearer to my Jesus, and makes me live in stricter fellowship with him; and then I can say, and feel it too, farewell fine world, farewell all thy fine things, farewell for ever! when they would keep me one moment from the enjoyment of my greatest good, and from the love of my best and eternal friend, my Jesus. I have not one uneasy thought about my mother. I have seen the Lord's love to her, and I know he changeth not; what he hath begun he will carry on. I can only pray, she may be as much satisfied in her own heart as I am about her. Sweet Jesus bless you in body, and soul, and substance. Give me an interest in your prayers, who am, your most affectionate brother,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXCV.

BRIGHTHELMSTONE, *Oct.* 8, 1765.

MY DEAR SISTER.—I have been waiting for an opportunity to write unto you, and it is now come. You love to hear, and I love to write, about our common friend, that matchless, loving, lovely Jesus, a subject one is never tired of; the more we dwell on it, the sweeter it grows; the longer we enjoy its sweetness, the more of heaven will come down to us, till we get up into heaven itself. To see Jesus in heaven and to enjoy him is the bliss of heaven. Thanks be to him, he is the joy of your heart and mine. Although we do know him, and rejoice in him, yet we know but little of what is to be known; for he is an infinite subject, and we can but know him in part—but let us press on to know more. And, as we grow more humble and teachable, he will show us more of the excellency of his knowledge. Pray earnestly for more deep heart-humility. Mind—what he hideth from the worldly wise, he revealeth unto babes, unto them who are child-like, and simple. The Lord make us more so daily, that we may know him aright; and then we shall always see our salvation from sin, and hell, and our title to heaven and glory, in him. We cannot know him truly without believing in him. When we understand his power, God-man—his errand into the world, to save sinners—his Almighty arm, and the love of his bleeding heart to save them; and what an innumerable company he has plucked out of hell's mouth, and raised up to his heaven; the more we know of these things, the more we can trust him. He says to all sinners, "Come to me, and I will save you." Oh what grace is in these lips—that you and I have heard his voice, and have come, and are saved. We do believe—Lord, increase our faith! let us pray much for it; because, as our faith in him increases, so will our love to him. I cannot believe he has finished salvation's work for me, and daily experience miracles of his love, without loving him in return; and as his miracles increase, I would love him more and more. Oh for more love to this best and dearest of friends! I am sure your heart says, *Amen*. Now the way to have his love both growing and increasing, so as to abound in us, is to be continually making use of him. He has all good in him; and he has it for you and me. He has the fulness in him of a fountain, to communicate of it. Of this fulness he would have us to make free; he invites us, commands us, to come with strong faith, and much love, that, by receiving from him great grace, he may get much glory from us, while we get much happiness from him. His generous offer is, "Come with boldness—all I have is for you." Faith replies, "Lo! I come, sweet Jesus, at thy bidding, every moment, for every thing, for grace and glory; I am content to receive all at thy hands, and to be indebted to thee for all, and that for ever and ever." While you live thus, my dear sister, in constant fellowship with your Saviour, he will give you continual reason to love him, and to bless him. He will so treat you, so comfort you, so strengthen you, will make you in him so holy and so happy, that every day he will enable you to trust him more and to love him better. Thus you will come to enjoy more

of him, you will delight more in his company, you will get greater intimacy with him, and will walk in close communion with him, which is heaven upon earth. This growing fellowship with him will increase the joys of your present salvation. So that, when doubt of his love, sense of indwelling sin, earth or hell, would tempt you from Jesus, he will speak in his word, and will speak to your heart, by his Spirit—"I am thine, fear not. I will guide thee with my counsel, and, after that, will receive thee into glory." You will believe steadfastly what he says, and will thereby resist and overcome the temptation. He will keep you; and you shall hold out unto the end, and shall know it too, and praise him for persevering grace. He will bless you in death; and the happiest time you ever knew will be, when he lays your body in a sweet sleep, and your spirit, with open face, shall see Jesus in the highest glory. To be with him for ever is the highest bliss. To this, I trust, he will bring you and me, that we may praise the riches of his grace, and get more in his debt for ever and ever. He is now teaching us this heavenly employment. You can, and I can, take the crown of all our graces, and throw it at his feet. Soon, very soon, we shall do the same with the crown of glory. O what a thought is that! The good Lord is preparing my mother to do the same. I heartily pray for her establishment in the faith; and am, with my wife's duty and love, your faithful friend, and affectionate brother, in our precious, most precious, eternally precious Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXCVI.

Lambeth, *Dec.* 27, 1763.

All the joy of this good season be with my dear sister, and my kind prayers for my mother's rejoicing also on this occasion. I thank you for your last letter, and would have answered it sooner, but have been busy from morning to night in transcribing my book for the press, which will come out with convenient speed; but I may not hurry. It is a deep subject, and depends much on experience; I therefore let it be read by my friends. Mr. Madan has read it, and approves of it. I send it to-morrow to Mr. Mason; and then I shall let it go. May the Lord Christ go out with it! Pray, my dear sister, for a blessing on the publication. I have been very ill, but am, through the goodness of my master, much better. I have not heen once kept from duty, although I have got a little chapel, at which I preach twice on Sunday, and a third time, at night, at St. Dunstan's. I commend you and my dear mother to the mercy of Jesus; and may his grace be with you living and dying. My wife and my children, both at home and well, desire their duty to my mother, and love to you. I am, with great respect and love, your affectionate brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CXCVII.

Aug. 20, 1765.

My dear Sister, to whom I wish an increase of grace and peace.—I could not withstand the persuasion I had to come to London; and, following it, I found my wife had been given over for some days. But God had mercy on her, and on me also. Dr. Griffith prescribed something which the Lord blessed, and she grew so fast better, that she herself insisted on my going to ——, from whence I returned last night. No time could I get to tell you of all this till to-day. My wife was and is better; my journey was prosperous in the Lord's matters, and I find all things well at home. "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in." So he promised—so he fulfils—as I can witness. I want nothing but more faith, to trust all with him, who, I am sure, freely loveth and blesseth me. The Lord increase my faith and yours! My duty to my dear mother; she is safe. Not only I say so, but so says the word of God. Die as she is, she

cannot perish—only she wants the present comforts of our salvation. She dares, she does, venture her soul in the hands of Jesus, who never did, nor can, lose any thing committed to his care. With him she is safe. Under his care, she is;—and, rejoicing in him, she will be, whenever she is able to separate believing from the fruits of believing. The Lord teach her, and do the good pleasure of his will in her with power!

Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Parker, and to Mr. and Mrs. Callender. The good Lord bless them all! May you enjoy much of his presence, and be guided till his Spirit bring you to the vision of Jesus!

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXCVIII.

LAMBETH, *April* 14.

THE Lord enrich you with all spiritual blessings, and keep you rejoicing in his precious love. He has let a little glimpse of his glory pass before me; and what I have seen, that I declare unto you. Next week, I hope to send you an hundred of my experiences, entitled, "The Life of Faith," where you will see how the Lord has taught me. When you read the book, I beg of the Lord to shine upon it, that you may have a right understanding in all things. Our kind love and duty to our dear mother, and hope her soul prospers in the knowledge and faith of the Lord. I wish to hear of it. Pray for your loving friend and brother in Christ,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CXCIX.

LAMBETH, *March* 3, 1764.

GRACE and peace be with my dear sister, and with my mother. I thank you for your note by the penny post. Our God is good. Oh, he is good indeed to us! Not a family perhaps in England so blessed of the Lord as we are. Why us; why us? Grace, grace has done it. Grace, grace must have the praise for ever. The time is at hand. The Lord hath spoken, "They that wait upon me shall never be ashamed." My mother is waiting. She trusts the Lord, but has not the comfort of believing. She shall not be ashamed. God will appear for her, and she shall rejoice in his salvation. I believe it, as much as if I now heard her in the "Triumph of Faith." My little book is almost printed off. Please to send me word how to send them, and what number. My dear sister, pray for it. Let it be a book of many prayers. Beg it may be a means of increasing faith in the hearts of all that shall read it.

I have got more preferment; God be thanked I am turned out of my little chapel. Rejoice with me, that I am counted worthy to suffer shame for his dear, dear, dearest of all names, Jesus. I do love him more for this mark of his love. 'Tis worth more than a thousand a-year. I find to lose for Christ is vast gain. Who would not part with farthings for guineas; oh, I cannot tell you, words fail, how he has made up this loss to me, and how he has won my very heart by it, and endeared himself beyond measure to me. Let me entreat you to press on. Look at nothing but the way of duty. Go on in that, and there, by faith, all things will work together for your good. Believe me, it is so. I find he makes all things, what the flesh hates most, do good. Fear nothing, then, but sin. And let the world rail, persecute, it matters not. You are safe in Jesus' love, and happy. I am rich. My heart, too, is open. I desire nobody may want, while my purse is full. My wife is well, and the children. We join in duty to my dear mother, and in love to yourself. I am, in the closest bonds of brotherly love, yours, for that dear Lamb's sake,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CC.

1765.

My dear Sister.—Having two or three minutes to spare, I could not avoid informing you of the Lord's great goodness to me and mine. Indeed, it is marvellous. How many blessings have I which numbers want! And how many have I, in not desiring what I do want! Whichever way I turn myself, blessings meet me, and yet I know not why I am so highly favoured, unless it be that God may be highly honoured. For none can be more unworthy, and therefore from none can grace get so much glory. My election is not ended about Blackfriars. Law goes on. But I am quite out of it. My mind is at peace. Thanks be to the dear, ever dear Jesus. It is my one desire to please him; but how or where is not my business. He must look to that. All his flock is infinitely precious; and none of them shall perish for lack of knowledge. If he want me to feed his sheep at Blackfriars, I shall go. If he does not, I trust I shall not go from him. Forbid it, Lord! and if his presence does but go with me, wherever I am, then I shall be there doing his will. So be it, sweet Jesus!

Your last account of my mother was very reviving to me. I hope I shall see her once more on this earth, (I have no doubt of seeing her in heaven,) and rejoice with her in the goodness of the Lord to her soul. When it will be I cannot tell, on account of this lawsuit But, God willing, nothing shall hinder my calling upon you some time this summer. Yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCI.

My dear Sister.—I thank you for your kind letter, and for your care of the enclosed. It was the last sheet of my sermons. I used to think I should never live to finish them; and yet God has lengthened my life, and this part of my work is done. These are some of my last thoughts; what I now think about religion; the thoughts which support me in the near views of death and judgment. I am wholly now for magnifying the grace and love of our dear Redeemer. He deserves more of me than I shall pay him to eternity; and therefore I would desire with Paul to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. To know him as crucified for me, and to feel the power and efficacy of his oblation on the cross, crucifying sin in me—to know this, is enough. Nothing more need be known. All besides is vanity, and will be vexation of spirit. Believe me, my dear sister, I have tried all that you can try out of him; and it is now grief to my heart. I not only renounce it, but also renounce it with sorrow, and that I should set up any thing against my precious Saviour, and leave him to seek for any elsewhere. He is all in all. What would ye more? For, "it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." May you and I dwell where all fulness is! I would have wrote sooner, but Mr. Grimshaw promised to send you a letter as soon as possible he could after we parted. Blessed be God, I bore my journey well. Nothing happened of what Mr. G. told, till I got home. I found my family well. As to myself, I am neither well nor ill: but it is best to be as God would have us to be. His will be done! I hope my dear mother will soon receive him, whom her soul longeth after. I do not doubt it. He has promised, and he cannot break his word. "He filleth the hungry with good things." My love to my sisters. I will send you some sermons soon. Pray for your brother in the strongest bonds,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCII.

LAMBETH, *April* 23.

GRACE and peace he to my dear sister, from that ever, ever blessed Jesus. Glory be to him. What wonders is he now doing in the earth! What miracles of love! Can there be greater than that you and I, such poor sinners, should have daily reason to praise and to bless him, and that we should have so many reasons to believe he will let us praise and bless him to all eternity. Oh! sister, is not this astonishing goodness? In sin dead, and liable to the second death, from hence he has raised us to a state of grace, and ere long will raise us to a state of glory. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.

He that is so infinitely kind to private persons, is the very same to his church; for that is only a congregation of private persons. What seems to hurt some of them is for the good of all. For the government of all is upon his shoulders, and he looks to the least as well as to the greatest of his matters. Not a hair falls, and much less a minister, without his appointment. I dare not therefore think one hard thought of his taking dear Mr. Grimshaw to himself. His work was done. The Lord took him to rest; and, as to his people, they will be well looked after. Their Shepherd will see to it, that they lack nothing. "But where," say you, "shall they go now, to find green pastures and the waters of comfort?" Why let them go to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Himself will feed them, as Psalm xxiii. "But he does it by means." That is true; and is not he the Lord of means? Cannot he find out means, when we are at a loss, if we look up with faith to him? I verily believe that Mr. Grimshaw's death will be as useful as his life; and the work is not yet come to its height in Yorkshire. No, it will spread farther, and deeper still; ministers' removals, yea, the most useful of us, shall tend to spread it. For all things work together, under God, for his glory and his people's good.

The more I think and preach about the infinitely rich Jesus, and his love, the greater still does he appear. My heart grows warmer to him. His cause grows more amiable; and nothing gives me pain, but that I do so little for him, and speak so poorly of him, and that this lazy body is so soon tired in his work. But I would do better, and shall too, by and by.—Ay, that is my comfort. I shall not always live at this poor rate. When I see him, I shall be like him. Farewell, then, to sin and sorrow. Temptations, farewell. Corruption is no more. Oh blessed time! Lord Jesus Christ fit you and me for the sight and enjoyment of himself!

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCIII.

GRACE and peace be to my dear sister.—I can thank the God of all grace for what he has already done for my mother; and I have no doubt but that he, who has begun the good work, will perfect it in her. She shall have peace: not because I say so, but God. He has promised it to her. She is seeking; she shall find. Trusting to this word, which cannot be broken, I am as easy about her as if I saw her in heaven. Which of us shall be there first, I know not; but I am waiting, not knowing when my Lord will come. On him I rest to carry me through life, through death; believing that, when he calls me hence, I shall see him face to face, to my eternal joy. And in his presence I shall find my dear mother, and you; yes, you, my sister. Only hold fast the faith, and soon you will win the crown. The devil has a vast spite against you. He begins to despair of drawing you from Christ, and then his malice puts him upon plaguing you. He will make your way as troublesome as he can. One of his grand engines against believers is error. If he can get the judgment wrong, he hopes thereby to prejudice the will, and so gain upon the heart. Thus he has always been undermining the

church. Oh! beware of this temptation. He commonly introduces it thus; "You are in Christ, and you are a believer; but you want light in such a doctrine." He allows the doctrine, but draws a false inference from it, under a pretence of illustrating the doctrine. Would you, my dear sister, not be ignorant of his devices? pray to be humble. Much humility is better than much knowledge. Many knowing persons have been lost; but none truly humble. The Lord Jesus keep you, and make you, in him, complete and happy. I have not forgot the Catechism, but I have not settled since I left you. I am at Brighthelmstone, in Sussex, and shall not be gone till November. The Lord has been wonderfully with us here, and many souls are awakened. Some walking rejoicing in the Lord, and vast congregations. I am, with great truth, your loving brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCIV.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 12, 1762.

Grace and peace to my dear mother, and to my sister.—Thanks be to the Lord for your kindness to me. I am much in your debt for many favours; but especially for sparing me in the article of writing. I am indeed a bad correspondent. Truth cannot be denied. When I shall mend, I know not. But, surely, between this and my next visit, I shall write more than four times. Matter enough I have to write about. My last journey gives me a large subject, but I forbear at this time, excepting what relates to my dear mother, of whose salvation I have no more doubt than of mine own. Her evidences were good to me, though they cannot be comfortable to her, till the Lord please to make them so. Such a conviction of sin, such humiliation for sin, could not be, but by the grace and Spirit of God. From him, also, is that reliance which she has, and will not let go, upon the word and promise of the Lord Christ. By and by he will seal them to her heart. I am, your truly loving brother, in the Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCV.

My dear Sister, to whom I wish an increase of grace.—I could delay no longer to thank you for your kind present, which came safe, and for your kinder letter. Your good wishes and prayers are the best present. Let me still share in them. I never wanted them more. My affair at Blackfriars is not settled; and I have strong applications to go to America, to a church in the city of Philadelphia. The Lord must determine. I would not have one wish against his will. Being bought with an infinite price, all I have and am should be at his service. He has a clear right to all. "Take it, Lord. Let it be thine for ever." But I shall not be in any hurry. Waiting is good—on the Lord. I will tarry his leisure, and look at his providences. My friends, in general, are for my staying in London; and so am I in my own mind. But I dare not choose, till my choice is made plain to me. Perhaps, the Lord may fix me at Blackfriars; and then the matter will be ended at once.

My hearty prayers are for my dear mother, that this year may be the happiest she ever saw. May she find Christ in it. He has sought her out, and found her; but she has not, in comfortable enjoyment, found him. That I wish and pray for, not doubting of the event; because I have his word that I shall succeed. "Seek and ye shall find," says he. His word is infallible. May she soon experience it in the joy of his salvation!

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCVI

LAMBETH, *Jan.* 7, 1776.

MY DEAR SISTER.—Although I am greatly hurried, yet I could not help informing you, that this day my cause, about Blackfriars, was finally determined, and in my favour. I have retired and been alone this afternoon to abase myself. This is to me an amazing event. That such an one should be made a pastor; one that is plagued to death with his own heart, to make him a watchman over others! What is the Lord doing? With the most utter abhorrence of myself, and of my being unfit to be minister of a great parish, in the midst of this great city—I have been forced to leave it to the Lord.

I have heard, in my heart, a voice say, "Whom shall I send?" And I have been compelled to say, "Here I am, send me." Trusting, then, sweet Jesus, to thy grace and power, depending upon thine arm and blessing, out I go, not only unfit, but also averse to the work. It is thine, Lord, "to work in me both to will and to do."

I believe you love me; indeed, I do not doubt of it; and therefore I give you this notice, to pray your Master and my Master, to fit me for this new work. He knows my heart: I never had one desire for this new work but that I might have more room to glorify my Jesus. I would not look at any thing but at his glory and at my humility. Will you intreat him, then, thus to set forth his praise? Beg of him to help me to exalt him, and to keep me down. Your affectionate brother,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCVII.

MY DEAR SISTER.—I have longed for a little time to write you a few lines—to thank you for your last letter, and for your kind remembrance of me at our court. Pray continue me that favour. And, when the King smiles upon you, and you have freedom to approach, and have access with confidence into his royal presence, then make request for your brother. He knows, for he sent me upon, my present work. I find myself as unfit for it as a dog that cannot bark, and therefore for grace, for gifts, for success, I am forced to depend upon him. Most gladly would I live as a minister, in the same way that I live as a Christian, "by the faith of the Son of God," trusting in him to do all for me. There is my own safety. As a sinner, I have no confidence in any thing, but the finished salvation, the blood and righteousness of the Lamb of God. This being a sure foundation for a sinner to rest upon, and having myself found how sure it is, I can, therefore, write freely, and mightily encourage all that hear, be they who they will, to venture upon this foundation, which God hath laid; leaving the success (but oh that it may be abundant!) to him, from whom alone it cometh.

Being safely built upon this foundation, I find continual matter of rejoicing. Whichever way I look, comfort presents itself. To be saved from what I was once, brought to what I am now, the God of all consolation become my God, his Son my Saviour, his Spirit my leader to Heaven, his promises mine; all, all mine, now enjoyed by faith; for ever, in full possession! What divine comforts are these? With these I would encourage the miserable to come to Jesus; that, having trusted themselves with them, he might have the glory of making them happy. Oh that I may prevail! Say, I want for this "Grace every moment." I call, and he, in whom all fulness dwells, says to me, "I will water thee every moment." I believe it—I experience it. Grace has made me willing to live out of myself—upon the fulness of Jesus. In him I have what I want; yea, from him I gain by my wants. I grow richer by my poverty, and happier by my

misery. Whatever it be, that brings me to live more upon his grace, is the means of my getting more grace, and thereby proves to me a real blessing. As I have freely received this grace, so I freely make the publication of it with all its benefits. I can tell my people, and boldly, that we are saved by grace; kept by grace; comforted by grace; sanctified by grace; and, although this be the doctrine against which the wicked one, the wicked world, and above all, the self-righteous world, fight with all their might: yet I am not discouraged, because Jesus is my strength. On him I depend for counsel to set about the work, for success in it, for a blessing upon it. If opposition arise—and it cannot but be that he who is born after the flesh should persecute him that is born of the Spirit—to my almighty King I fly, and on his promised help I trust. Oppose what will, Jesus is on the throne. All power in heaven and earth is his. By faith, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, I have seen the most formidable opposition fall before me. Therefore, let us go on, walking straight forward to Jesus, whatever may stand to stop us in the way. If war arise, hot, fierce, and long battles; many enemies, mighty and strong, all the hosts of earth and hell; then Jesus is my victory. He arms me for the battle with the whole armour of God: clad in which, he teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight; strengthens the heart to hold out in long battles; discovers plots and wiles of subtle foes; gives courage to meet the roaring lion; brings the soldier off conqueror day by day, and more than conqueror at last, his enemies all eternally vanquished; he then sits down upon a throne crowned with everlasting glory and honour. It is blessed fighting through Jesus our captain: Oh! what will it be to reign with Jesus our King! Heaven it is upon earth to enjoy him; and there is heaven in every thing which brings me to more enjoyment of him. This the apostle had in his eye, and he had a great deal of it in his heart, when he called upon his Ephesians, to grow up into him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ. Mind, all things, while we live by faith, shall make us grow up into Christ more closely and intimately; finding you want him daily more and more, for life and godliness, for body and soul, for time and eternity: so that, without him you can do nothing. The abiding sense of this will keep you in your right place, as a poor helpless creature, hanging on the arm, living on the bounty, of the infinitely rich Jesus. This is the believer's growth. He grows more up into Christ. Taught by the Spirit of Jesus, he sees and feels his want of every good; and he is made to see and feel this continually, that he may not live upon self, upon any creature, upon worldly happiness; but that, finding his need of Jesus every moment, he may be receiving, every moment, grace for grace out of Jesus' fulness. Oh for more of the teaching of that Spirit, to humble us, and to glorify Jesus! Oh for more fellowship with him in his fulness of grace! Heaven is nothing more than fellowship with him in his fulness of glory. May my dear mother know him thus! I cease not to remember her at his throne. Her case is safe. I only wish her more happy in believing it. All here are well, and desire to be remembered to you, with your truly affectionate brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCVIII.

1766.

My dear Sister, grace be with you.—I begin to think it long since I heard from Hartlepool; but supposing you make nothing of the note which I sent from Helmsley, I must therefore write first, which I gladly do, embracing this and all occasions to tell of Jesus' love. His mercies have followed me all the days of my life—most free and undeserved—to body and soul. Surely a greater monument lives not. He brought me home safe—keeps me in health—gives me enough and to spare of this world's good; and I taste the love of the giver in his every gift. What would I more? Why, truly, nothing in this world. But, if I am thus indebted for temporal blessings, where shall I begin to set forth

his infinite grace in spirituals? I am that brand, such as the like is not, plucked by Almighty love out of the burning. I might have been in it forty, ay, fifty years ago, and in it for ever. Oh what patience was there in the Lamb! But he was resolved to have all the glory: and indeed he richly deserves it—both for saving me out of hell, and for giving himself to me to be a Saviour; and for giving his Spirit to bring me to know myself, and to know him, whom to know is life eternal. All the angels, all the saints, could not tell how great his love already experienced is to me. How far short must I myself fall! I am content he should have the crown. It well becomes the head of King Jesus. I pay him willing homage, and am glad to take a free pardon, a perfect title to heaven, at his royal hands. Indebted to him for heaven, makes the thoughts of it sweet. I would not be out of his debt if I could.

Are not you glad? I know you are, that to me Jesus has been so exceedingly kind in all things. Yea, to mine, my family, and relations. What grace has been shown! How much are we bound to acknowledge his bounty! Oh let us with our lips and lives show forth his praise! and let my mother join. I am sure she ought. Blessings on her from the best of friends. So prays yours and hers in a precious, ever precious Saviour,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCIX.

LAMBETH, 1767.

MY DEAR SISTER.—I was in hopes you would have disposed of my charity before this, and would have let me know to whom I am to pay the money. I am thankful you had my commission, for I think it can never be more wanted. The good Lord secure to himself all the glory of this, and of every act of kindness to his afflicted members. I am praying for my dear mother, Jesus hear me! that this may be the grand year of her life, when she will say,—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, for he hath forgiven thee all thy sins. He himself is become thy salvation." Oh what a journey should I have to Hartlepool, if I was to come and hear this voice of joy and thanksgiving. Well, I do not doubt of it. All is now safe. All will be comfortable, when the Lord pleases. Let him do what seemeth him good. A happy, happy year, to her and to you!

Through mercy, I am going on very well. I want nothing but more capacity to praise and to enjoy Jesus. He is very near to me, and he makes himself very dear. He still smiles on our meetings, and is in the midst of us. Blackfriars is owned by him. He has set to his seal that God is there. Oh for more of his presence to fill the ordinances with life and power. Pray for us, my dear sister, and you will not lose any thing by our having much of Christ with us. We will pray for you in return. To him I commend you, whose love is truly heaven, even upon earth. May you never want it till you enjoy all its fulness, together with your loving brother,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCX.

Feb. 21, 1767

ALL spiritual blessings be with my dear sister.—I thank you for your last favour, and for being my almoner. I hope you will write to me soon, and let me know how my mother does. As she is in the Lord's hands, all will be well. Before she goes hence, he will open her mouth to speak for Jesus. I go on with my prayers, that the Lord's good pleasure may be done in her. Here is good news of the increasing kingdom of Jesus. More ministers, especially, are raised up. We have more awakenings among us. More refreshing times Things wear a

very promising aspect. Thanks for these blessings! May they bring down more! Oh praise the Lord with us, and let us magnify his name together! May we join to thank him for poor Hartlepool sinners! I charge you not to forget me, or Blackfriars, in your prayers. I cannot forget you. The precious Lord Jesus be your companion and guide unto death. I am, very heartily, yours in him,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXI.

Lambeth, *June* 27, 1767.

My dear Sister.—I have been waiting for a long time to write to you, that I might fix the time of seeing you, but have been prevented hitherto, by my being disappointed of three curates. At present I am without one; and I know not when I shall get one to my mind. I am obliged to stay till I do. Your letter this morning would not let me delay any longer. As to the contents, having received no hint from any quarter, I was indeed surprised at ——'s affair; and, as to your own connexions, you are of age, and the best judge. Whatever you do, my prayers and best wishes shall attend you, married or unmarried.

If any thing can bring me down soon, it will be your account of my mother. I know she is safe as to her state, but is puzzled about the evidence of it; which robs her of her present peace, but cannot hurt her salvation. Of this I have no doubt. I have conversed with her for several years upon this point, and am perfectly acquainted with her state. All here join in prayers for her, as long as we know her to be within the reach of prayer; and, if God permit, I will come and pray with her.—I commend you and her to the care of our dear Jesus, and am, very heartily in him, your friend, and loving brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXII.

Blackfriars, *June* 28, 1768.

My dear Sister.—I purpose, through God's blessing, to be at Northallerton, Monday next, July 4th, and desire my old fellow-traveller may meet me there with horses the same day, time enough for me to get to Yarum that night, if we cannot reach Hartlepool. I hope to be at Northallerton about noon, or soon after. Once more, the Lord in great mercy will bring us together, and will, I trust, accompany our meeting with his blessing. If it be agreeable, I will be either at Hartlepool or Strantum, on Sunday, July 10th. Remember me, with my best prayers for my dear mother; my love to brother Heslup. I am, with great truth and love, your affectionate friend and brother,

W. Romaine

LETTER CCXIII.

Blackfriars, *Nov* 19, 1768.

My dear Sister.—I thank you very much for your last letter, and for the contents of it—particularly for the good account of my mother's welfare. The Lord prosper her still more and more. I am still praying for her life. If the people at Hartlepool knew how much depended on it, they would do the same.

You tell me good news of poor sinners converted, and of believers settled and established in their most holy faith. My heart rejoices to hear of any increase of Jesus' glory. He is the prince of the kings of the earth—to whom all blessing

is due.—Yea, he is above all blessing and praise, and that for evermore; because he humbled himself, God was made man; Oh wonderful humiliation!—He went lower; humbled himself to become obedient—obedient unto death—even the death of the cross—therefore he is highly exalted.—King of kings—crowned—many crowns upon his head. Oh how I triumph in my inmost soul in his love! —He loved me—I pay him homage—all within me, all without me, blesses his holy name. He is my king—my royal Saviour—I pay him my allegiance with heart and hand. Not that he may be away—Away with that proud thought!—But because he is mine:—therefore I would walk before him, without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

My kind love to Mr. Heslup, and desire him to exalt Jesus. He cannot set him too high. He cannot think of him so high as he is; so high as he deserves. The higher he is exalted, the more will every thing, sin especially, bow before him.

When you write to Sunderland or Newcastle, pray remember me to my sisters, their husbands, and to their families. I desire and beg for an interest in your prayers, and am, with my duty to my dear mother, and prayers for her, your affectionate friend and brother,

W. ROMAINE

LETTER CCXIV.

Nov. 7, 1769.

MY DEAR SISTER, grace and peace be multiplied unto you.—May you be growing and increasing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have a sweet and abiding sense of it in your heart, enjoying daily more of that peace of God, which is heaven begun. I pray you not to rest or stop in any attainments. Keep going on. Be pressing forward. Faith should grow. We read of going from faith to faith, from one degree to another. There should be a progress, both in the knowledge of your interest in Jesus, and in the enjoyment of the good things, in which you are interested. If faith must grow, then hope must also; for hope is the daughter of faith. By faith we trust the word of God, by hope we wait, till we receive the promises in his word. Hope is never disappointed, nor does it ever make ashamed. It gets many a pledge, and brings in sweet foretastes of the things hoped for. A true believer therefore never says, I have enough. No, no; his hunger and thirst increases by tastes and crumbs of glory: what falls from his Lord's table whets his appetite for the marriage supper. So the apostle prays for the believing Romans—"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the Holy Ghost." Now in proportion as faith and hope grow, so does love.—We love God, because we believe he first loved us; and this love increases, as faith gives a more substantial presence to the things hoped for. Love is now in its infancy—the greatest love upon earth is but one ray of the morning dawn, compared to the shining of the perfect day. Oh my dear sister, never think you have attained perfect love, till you get into a perfect heaven. Be still going on growing in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God your Saviour. There is room enough for this, both on Jesus' part and on yours also. He can give more; you can receive more. And, as faith enlarges your vessel, you will hold more. As hope increases, you will enjoy more. And this I pray heartily, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all sensible feeling, that you may walk in love, till faith and hope leave you in full possession of the love of God in life everlasting.

I write thus, because I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. I am afraid you should stop by the way. Many do. They set out well, but fall asleep, and dream of being in heaven, while their welfare is carrying on upon earth. They fancy to themselves a triumphant state, while they are militant. A sad delusion!

Because it tempts them to rest, when they should be fighting; and to sit still, when they should be pressing forward. Are you a believer? Yes. Well then, the gospel says,—"Forget the things which are behind, and reach forth unto the things which are before." How long must I do this? Till you have laid hold of eternal life. Faith should be growing, hope should be increasing, and love abounding, unto death; or, as the Apostle has it, 1 Thess. i. 3, faith should be at its work, love at its labour, hope at its patience, waiting on patiently, till we have finished our course with joy. I pray God you may be thus employed, when death calls you to judgment.

Remember me, with all duty, to my dear mother. I bless God for his great grace to her, and doubt not but he hears prayer for its continuance. My love to Mr. Heslup, and let him read the former part of the letter, and study it. I would have him not grown up (till he is dead), but growing up into Christ Jesus in all things.

I have been trying to spread the fame of our precious Jesus in various parts of England—a journey of near eight hundred miles.

I rejoice with you in the spreading of the gospel in your parts. It is the Lord's doing; and it should be marvellous in our eyes.

You must not forget me in your prayers. I want them much. At present, I am in a great difficulty. My lecturer is gone, and I am forced to do the duty myself—for fear a false prophet should get in. I did not seek it; but I hope the Lord, now he has called me to it, will give me will and power, and if it please him, success. Desire your friends to pray for me.

My wife travelled with me. We found the children well. I have nothing to tell of but mercies—May the giver add one to them all—even a heart to praise, and to bless his goodness. *Amen.* I am, with great truth, your loving brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXV.

My dear Sister, it is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.—So says faith: so should you and I say. My thoughts upon this occasion have not been improved, as I could wish, through great bodily pain and indisposition; but such reflections as these have greatly tended to quiet my mind, and to produce a willing submission:

First, My mother's true conversion to the Lord. She knew in whom she had believed; and she was in Christ, Christ was her gain, both in life and death. Glory be to him for this great grace.

Secondly, She died in faith: Oh what a mercy, to finish all well! What are we desiring for ourselves, as Christians, but the same mercy, that we may hold out to the end, and finish our course with joy? Therefore,

Thirdly, We are not to mourn as those who have no hope. Our dearest friend is with her Lord, with whom we expect to be soon. We have only parted a moment, that we may meet for ever. It looks to me, in my near view of death, only like my taking leave of my dear mother, to go yearly to London. I shall go to her—blessed, truly blessed prospect! and I do not wish her to come back to me:—because—

Fourthly, I do indeed find, that the Lord supplies the want of all creature comforts with his own presence. When he takes them away, it is to make more room for himself in the heart. A sweet exchange! we live upon the fountain, when the streams are dried up. He dries them up to make us come nearer to the fountain, and that the absence of temporal mercies might be supplied with an happy enjoyment and communion with God himself.

She had lived to a blessed time—even speaking after the manner of men—she died in a good old age, full of years—and was gathered to her people; to whom I am going. Now it is my turn. I know of nothing worth living for one day.

We are now travellers; and what traveller does not wish to be at rest? We are now absent from our Lord; and home is home. What soldier, after a hard campaign, does not wish for winter quarters? What man in love, does not wish the moments to fly swiftly, to bring on his wedding day? Oh for that blessed consummation which will last for ever and ever to all eternity.

I shall love you, my sister, as long as I live, for your attention to my dear mother. You have done your part. May you do all as well as this! I thank you for my part, and honour you greatly. My kind love to Mr. Heslup. He has been tried with his attention to my mother; the good Lord repay his kindness a thousand fold. Mine eyes overflow with tears, while I am thinking of both your goodness to her—God bless you both—God bless you. My kind love to my sisters, and their husbands.

Poor Hartlepool! few know this loss. It is the greatest the town could have.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXVI.

BLACKFRIARS, *Sept.* 6, 1771.

GRACE be with you and your yoke fellow. I know we are in a dying world—I see it, and feel it. It is my heart's desire to live under the constant impression of this truth; there is but a step between me and death, but a step between me and the full enjoyment of what I have now by faith. It is not that I love you not—God knoweth my love to you is double—you are twice my sister, born, and new-born. And I truly esteem you both in the flesh and in the spirit. But I could not come and tell you this face to face, but I shall come, God willing, and tell it you, and the reasons too, that you may be satisfied. Only wait patiently, and see how good the Lord will be to us in this, and in all other things that we wait upon him for. It is my fixed purpose to visit you, as early as I can in the spring; but the great Disposer of all our purposes has us in his hands. Our will must bow to his sovereign will; and, in submission to it, we always speak of to-morrow, not knowing what a day may bring forth.

I can very well supply my absence. There is no want of preaching; we have enough of that, and too much in the preacher's strength. We want prayer greatly—a dependence on the almighty Head to bless preaching to his people. This seems to be wanting both in preachers and hearers. I can do something towards the supply of this want: and am trying at it. Oh that fervent effectual prayer was but ascending more and oftener to the throne of grace; we should have more showers of blessings coming down. I beg not to be forgotten by you at any time before the throne. May I never forget you nor yours.

Errors and heresies are rampant. God keep you! I beg of Mr. Heslup to be much at his Bible; he reads other books too much. I am sure, God the Holy Ghost is the best writer; and I find him the best expositor upon his own writings. Tell Mr. Heslup so. I repent of years wasted in fruitless study, and am, just as my studies are over, got to be right in them. I wish he may improve by my mistakes, and now in earnest resolve to be a Bible-student, and a Bible-christian. Farewell, my dear sister. May all the rich covenant mercies of our Jesus be yours. My wife joins in every christian wish. The children are well. I am for his sake, very sincerely, your loving brother,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXVII.

BLACKFRIARS, *Oct.* 27, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER, often remembered, and interest made for you at our court. I have been upon the King's business, travelling from place to place, to exalt and honour him, for near three months. He has been pleased to bring me

safe home for the winter, and I sit down the first opportunity to thank you for all your kindness to me at Hartlepool. I did not doubt of your love, but my visit this year confirmed me in it. Your whole behaviour convinced me, that I was a welcome guest, and has kept a warm desire upon my mind to see you again. Thankful am I, for what I met with of the same kind, both at Newcastle and Sunderland, especially at the latter, as I was never so highly honoured before, as to be suffered to speak for my glorious Jesus. Although things were not so pleasing at Yarum, yet I forgive from my very heart Mr. O.'s treatment; for I believe G. M. is a dear child of God, and was misled by his partner, who misrepresented me. People will quarrel; I would hinder them, if I could; but quarrel I will not: no, not with Mr. O. Thanks be to the Prince of peace—he has taught me better things. I know him God-man; I believe in his work—it is the greatest work of God—a complete, an eternal salvation. Oh, marvellous grace, I enjoy it. While others dispute about it, I am possessing it. They busy themselves about shadows, and I am rejoicing in the substance. Would to God Mr. O. had the same fellowship with Jesus. Poor man! he would not talk of himself before the Lord God, and plead his own doings—he would not urge this plea; "Lord, my works last July were very meritorious, for I stood and tried to stop all I could from going to Yarum church, to hear that heretic Romaine, who was going to teach them, that they were to be saved wholly and solely for what you had done and suffered, and all glory as well as all grace by the way, was to be had entirely out of your fulness." But enough of this: Mr. W. forgives him; so do I: Christ forgive him.

My motto has long been, "Cease ye from man." All my experience leads me to trust man less, and God more. My Bible is my study, and the Holy Ghost my commentator. I have done with names—great authorities—and living popes—for we have an English pope. In opposition to whom, I am a protestant. I protest against the merit of works, and all its long train of errors; but I will not dispute with any pope: I will rather pray for him, as I do. God open his eyes, and turn him from darkness to light, from blind popery into gospel liberty.

My love to Mr. Heslup. I fear for him, lest these times should take him off from Christ, and get him into disputing. Desire him, from me, to read his Bible more, and not busy himself about opinions. What has he or I to do with Mr. Wesley? Let him go on in his way; and let us go on in ours. But let us be as diligent as him—our lives as exemplary—our good works as many. And let us beat him all to nothing in charity. If he revile, let us pray. If he be dogmatical, let us be meek and lowly. I cannot give any account for my writing about him, for I do not love to have anything to do with him; but it came upon my mind—and I let it stand. I should rejoice to hear from you. We are all well. I am yours and Mr. Heslup's very heartily,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXVIII.

Nov. 9, 1771

My dear Sister.—I wrote to you some time ago, and hearing Mr. Parker was ill, I got a frank to Mr. Callender, in which I sent a long letter to him, and another to Mr. Parker. None of you have thought it worth while to send me an answer, at which I am a good deal surprised. I therefore beg the favour of you, upon the receipt of this, to give me some account of my sisters, and their husbands, and families: and also how you go on at Hartlepool. You must not think me indifferent to the cause and interest of God anywhere; but surely not among our own relations, and least of all among relations hitherto so kind and obliging to me. I send you my written sermons, when I cannot come to preach in person, but I am waiting in hope, when I shall confirm my doctrine by word of mouth, and find a proper time to bear my testimony again to the divine glory of the person of Jesus, and to his absolutely perfect salvation. Be assured, my

dear sister, it is complete, lacking nothing. We carry nothing to him, but receive all from him. We have, from his fulness, change of state, of tempers, of life. He is the author of all our good thoughts, words, and works. If these have any merit, it must be put to his account, and not to ours; for he worketh all for us and all in us. And he will and must have all the glory too. Oh that you may be willing to give it him! That is true holy humility. You cannot think what grace he gives to them, who are willing to return him all his glory. Try, pray for a growing sense of your own unworthiness, and the lower and viler you are in your own eyes, the more will he be honoured for his grace, and therefore he will give you more; for he giveth grace unto the humhle. Nothing stops the current of his favours so much as pride: he resisteth the proud; he is at war with them. A sad war! a proud sinner fighting against an holy God. Who, think ye, will conquer? And how low will the proud be laid? Oh beware of all high thoughts. Take heed of admiring your own greatness or goodness. Self-delight is a very pleasing sin, but more odious to a jealous God than the gross sins of the flesh. I see those, who fall in love with themselves, do not think with me about my heavenly lover: I am sure, the more we love him, the less we shall admire ourselves. The Pharisee, full of self-complacency, remained in his guilt; the poor publican, who loathed himself, went home justified: so must we go to heaven, pleading all the way, and pleading there, too, mercy of God through Jesus Christ, and nothing else.

You will say, what is all this to me? Why, truly, sister, you want it. There is no perfect humility but in heaven. Till we get there, we should be learning, and every day seeking for more grace to humble us—learning of our master to be meekly and lowly. May God make you and me better scholars, and Mr. Heslup; for he wants much to keep him down. My kind love to all friends. Do not fail me in writing the first post. I commend you to Jesus' care and love, being truly yours in him,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXIX.

Dec. 22, 1772.

MY DEAR SISTER.—Although I have not heard from you for some time, yet I cannot help wishing you every Christmas blessing. And what these are, how many, how great, none can tell. It is the great mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh—God born for us in the flesh—born in us by the Spirit. Then we keep our Christmas, when we are new born, the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. This new birth of Christ, formed in us, and dwelling in our hearts by faith, appears, as our birth into this world does. The new-born babe enters the world with crying: so they who have received the Spirit of adoption cry, "Abba, Father." They are the brethren of Christ, one with him; and his Father is their Father. Oh inestimable privilege: what a blessing to believe it! What blessings come from enjoying it! How many soever they be, I wish them yours. When the infant is born, it cries for food; in like manner, believers, as new born-babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. In Christ their souls live, as their bodies do in this world: on him also they live, and by feeding on his word, and mixing prayer and praise, they grow up into him in all things—doing nothing, either temporal or spiritual, but by the faith of the Son of God. For ever blessed are they who keep such a Christmas—who can call Christ their brother, his Father their Father, by the indwelling Spirit; and who can evidence this to themselves and others, by a conversation directed to the glory of God.

Thus would I live, thus may you live!—in Christ, and on Christ, and to Christ. If we receive much from him, let us not rob him of his honour. If we do much for him, we have nothing to boast of; for he worketh in us both to will and to do. I am for good works, as much as any of them; but I would do them to a right end, and upon a right motive; and, after all, having done the best that can be

done, I would not lay the weight of the least tittle of my salvation—no, not one atom of it, upon them. It all rests on Christ—he is my only foundation—he is my topstone: and all the building, laid on him, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord. He has done all for me. He does all in me. He does all by me: to him be all the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Times are very hard: but the best things are the cheapest. You may have Christ for nothing: and the more freely you receive, the more freely you will honour him with his gifts. So I feel it. Remember me to your poor: I beg their prayers; for I want them much.

My kind love to Mr. Heslup. I wish Christ and he were better acquainted. I am sure the more he knows of Christ, the more he will love him, and his word and ways, because of Christ himself revealed in them. Farewell, my dear sister; and I charge you not to forget, in your daily prayers, your true friend and brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXX.

June 26, 1773.

My dear Sister.—I am obliged to you for your last favour. You would have received my acknowledgment sooner; but I was waiting to see how my way could be directed this summer. I have waited so long, that I am quite ashamed to be silent any longer; and, therefore, take my pen to tell you, that there is at present nothing determined about my travels. I hope to be where the Lord pleases, and to be found doing his work. Then all will be well, wherever I am.

My thoughts often run about poor Hartlepool. I believe the Lord has a people among you, and I wish he may honour Mr. Heslup, by making him useful to gather them together, and to build them up in their most holy faith. My prayers are not wanting for him and them; particularly I desire the Prince of peace to keep him from a disputing spirit. I do not know that he is given to it, but I know many who are: whose principles, as well as tempers, incline them to be of a self-righteous, and therefore of a censorious and wrangling spirit. I have suffered more from such than from all the world beside. Bid Mr. Heslup take warning from me. I advise him to avoid controversy, as he would the plague. And, if he would be kept entirely, I will tell him how I am kept. The doctrines which others are disputing about, I am living upon. They have ceased to be with me matters of controversy. I have brought them into experience. By which means, I not only am certain of their truth, but also receive from it great profit. Doubting and disputing are at an end; for what room can there be to question any doctrine, while it is really practical, and brings in a great revenue? Thus a man gets to be settled. Others quarrel about the shell, he feeds upon the kernel; and often feasts upon it.

My wife is in good health. We all desire to be kindly remembered to you and to Mr. Heslup, especially, your loving brother,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXI.

May 24, 1777.

My dear Sister.—As to the particulars about house and land—I write nothing. Hope to see you in June, as I promised, and see nothing at present to stop me. If I keep my word, will not God? And what is faith but taking him at his word? What is all religion but trusting to his faithfulness? Is not this the highest service of the heart? and if it be real there, the service also of the life? For the obedience of faith is the obedience of the whole man. What honour does this put upon God! His wisdom in contriving such a salvation—his love in revealing it—his power in working it out—his promises of giving it

freely—and his fulfilling them perfectly—these, and all his attributes, are glorified in believing: for then we set to our seal, that God is true. We are of one mind with him; of one will with him: and, if we can trust simply what he says—yea, trust, when difficulties be in the way of his fulfilling his word; then we show that our faith is strong: but, if we can trust against seeming impossibilities, against hope believe in hope, then we prove ourselves the children of believing Abraham. I can assure you, sister, that my highest lesson is this; and I learn it slowly. I want to honour God in his word, by believing against sense—sometimes it is well with me—but presently I stagger. Yet I aim at stronger standing in faith daily. Pray for me. My love to Mr. Heslup. I have no advice to give him till I see him; only I wish he may not move, till the cloud moves. Mr. M. breakfasted with me to-day, who is still misinformed, and lives at a very low rate in believing.

Mrs. Petre must send me another receipt for ten pounds—her salary is so much this year—signed as before, only the sum altered. You may pay her, if she wants it much. My love to our friends at Newcastle and Sunderland. I am, very sincerely, yours, in our common Lord,

W. ROMAINE

LETTER CCXXII.

Aug. 5, 1769.

MY DEAR MOTHER.—This is the first letter that I have had time to write since I left Hartlepool, and as you have a right to my daily remembrance, I begin my correspondence where it is first due. My journey was very pleasant, not hot, nor dusty. All quiet and happy within. The Lord's countenance shining in an unclouded sky. Mercies upon mercies—heaped up and running over. It seems as if I was singled out to be a witness for my God, that his mercies are above all his works. I arrived safe, and visited my house, and found fresh matter of praise and thanksgiving. All glory be to free grace!

When I look back to Hartlepool, and review the dealings of a precious Jesus with you and with yours, my debt increases: and when I consider his goodness to Hartlepool sinners, and Bishopric sinners—how many of them he has called from darkness to light. Oh what a tribute of praise ought we to be continually paying to the Saviour of the North Country! And, if we particularly consider our relations, one by one, whom it has pleased our good God to work upon by his Holy Spirit, we should call upon all within us to bless his holy name, and all without us to join in showing forth his praise. This, for my own part, I would most gladly do, having seen so much in my last journey, both of his presence with me, and of his grace working by me, that I am ready to join all that are praising our good God, and to crown our royal Lord and Saviour, the free giver of all blessings both in earth and in heaven.

I have had a good time at the assizes, and preached to a vast congregation. The seed was sown; but the great Sower is the Son of man himself—unless he rain and shine upon the word, man's ploughing, and harrowing, and sowing, will come to nothing. I would therefore preach as well as live, in a constant dependence upon the blessing of Jesus. After mentioning the loving-kindness of the Lord, we should remember our want of it still, and how we are to receive the supply of our continual wants. We have a prayer-hearing God. He has answered all our petitions for you; whereby he has encouraged us to come again without doubt or wavering. This I hope to do for you, my dear mother, as long as you or I are within the reach of prayer. He has let you live to a good time. You know him; you believe in him, as your Jesus. He is your Lord and your God. It is our part and duty to beg of him, that you may be every day growing in grace, and in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and that, whenever he shall be pleased to take you to himself, you may witness a good confession, and confirm the truth by your death, as you do by your life. I beg my love to Mr. and Mrs. Heslup. Pray tell them that I never had so

pleasant a journey in all my life, so many gracious providences, and so many outward mercies, besides the peace in my own soul;—encouragements these not to neglect coming another summer. Oh that, whenever I do come, it may be to the praise of the glory of rich free grace; and, if I stay longer than I used to do, which all appearances seem to favour, may the good Lord overrule a longer stay for greater good.

And, as I hope there are several in Hartlepool who have nearness to the throne of grace, I desire you would, one by one, desire them to make use of their interests for me. If you see my brother Parker and wife, or Callender and wife, intreat the same favour of them: I ask it of none but those who are already in my debt, and who ought to get out of it as fast as they can. I am, with my duty to you, and my love and respect to all friends, your affectionate son, and most obedient servant,

W Romaine.

LETTER CCXXIII.

July 26, 1793.

My good Brother.—I was very glad to see your testimony, at last, concerning my sister—and thank you for it. She was the Lord's; she lived to him and on him—and she is with him—where I hope you and I shall soon be with him, and like him for evermore. Till that happy day, you are called upon to be a public witness for him. May you preach him in his glorious fulness, and may the Holy Ghost come down from heaven upon your preaching, that Northumberland sinners may hear and live. Do your best. Exalt him with all your might in your pulpit and in your living, you will do but little. I am an old preacher, and have seen enough of his glory to be ashamed of myself; I reprobate all my services; and, if I were to begin again, I would try to shoot higher—and I do. Blessings on him! He is above all blessing and praise. Perhaps, before I see you I may see him face to face, when he will enable me, without one selfish thought, to give him all the glory: to him I commend you. May he supply my sister's place. You will miss her more every day. Your lesson is to pray him to fill up her absence with his presence. Pray for it. So does

W. Romaine.

*To a Friend, on the most important Subjects, during a Correspondence of Twenty Years.**

LETTER CCXXIV.

Dec. 28, 1762.

My dear Friend.—I do not forget you nor your last favour. Till memory fail me, I hope in a grateful mind to retain a sweet sense of your kindness to me. Blessed be his name! I have a desire put into my heart by my heavenly lover to spread his fame and glory as far as my tongue can reach: and for what else do I take up my pen but to make mention of him, even of him only?—The favourite theme of his redeemed on earth; the triumph of the same redeemed, when they come to Sion with everlasting joy upon their heads and in their hearts. My meditation of him is now sweet: in one single point of view I am beholding him, and in that he is all glorious. Oh that the faithful witness for him may give you to feel what I have felt of his incarnate love! May the Spirit glorify in your soul that greatest, that standing miracle of Jehovah's everlasting grace, by letting you know, that, for you a child was born, for you a son was given, even Immanuel himself—God with us, and God for us. I will try to lead you, by the light of revelation, into some of the wonders of this transaction, as they have been manifested with life and power unto my own heart.

The scripture is a full description of the purposes of the divine will from eternity to eternity. Therein we find a council held, before all worlds, between

* Published from the original manuscript, by Thomas Wills, A.B., minister of Silver-street chapel, and formerly of Magdalen-hall, Oxford.

the Holy Trinity, and the decrees of this council, confirmed by the covenant and oath of each of the divine persons. This was the great contrivance of heaven, and it lay in the bosom of Jehovah with infinite delight. He viewed it as the richest display of all his divine perfections, in which, and for which, his glory would be admired and enjoyed by his creatures for ever and for ever. Immanuel was the centre of this covenant—his becoming surety for his people—taking flesh for them—living and dying, that the divine honours of the holiness, and truth, and justice of the Godhead might shine forth in full-orbed glory, for showing mercy to poor sinners. This was, this is, this will be the eternal subject of praise. Hear how the Father triumphs in the Son of his love: Behold my servant, whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. And again, with a voice from heaven, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. All the counsels, decrees, and works of Jehovah terminate, yea begin and end, in this blessed Immanuel; and, therefore, when the angels were created, the purpose of Jehovah's taking flesh was manifested to them; and proclamation was made: Let all the angels of God worship him. Pride arose in the heart of Lucifer and his companions: their will opposed the will of the eternal Three in this matter, for which they were cast out of heaven, and have opposed Christ and his people ever since.

Then this world was created for the carrying into execution the purposes of the everlasting covenant. Man, the object of the Deity's delight, as made in the image of God—part of two worlds: a body of earth, an immortal spirit—by the one connected to matter and sense; by the other to God, the father of spirits. The enemy of Jesus attacked Eve, and beguiled her through his subtlety. Adam was not deceived, but fell by listening to his material and sensual part. He preferred his wife to God, and so lost his image, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

Upon this the revelation of the covenant was made, and the incarnation of Jehovah was made known, as the ground of faith and hope, and of return again to God in the way of love and gratitude. As clear as words can speak and signs declare, the promised seed of the woman was to attack Satan, and was to bruise his head, where his poison lies, and thereby to deliver his people. For this purpose the Father sent him into the world, that he might deliver us from the power of darkness, and translate us into the kingdom of his dear Son. I believe, from the evidence of scripture, that Adam, and all believers downwards, had as clear a view of the incarnation of Jehovah, and of the reasons for his taking flesh, as you and I have; and with as warm hearts as we can, have they rejoiced in the God of their salvation. Hear one of them, how he stands amazed at this miracle of mercy: "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth?" And mind the pious breathings of his holy father—how he longed for Christmas! "Oh that the salvation was come unto Israel out of Zion! Oh that the Lord would deliver his people out of captivity! Then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." That he would come, was the ground of hope to all believers in every age; and there were many of them waiting when he came, who blessed God for letting them see with their eyes his great salvation. At the fixed moment, when the fulness of time was come, there was a chosen vessel most graciously fitted and humbled for this miraculous conception. She was highly favoured, high in grace, meek, and lowly in heart; and of her, by the power of the Holy Ghost, was that holy child conceived; of her, the virgin mother, was he born; a babe, helpless as we are. Here is love! Oh what a miracle—God incarnate! And yet like us in all things—an infant. Be astonished, ye heavens! and adore, thou earth! this miracle of miracles!

He is born among us; grows up as we do: a child, a youth, a man—true and very man. But, oh the rapturous thought! he is Jehovah. Think, oh think what that blessed woman felt when she broke out into this sweet hymn: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. There is my honour: not that he is my son, but that he is God, my Saviour. He took my nature, that I might take his: he lived for me, that by his obedience I might be made righteous: he suffered my punishment, that I might never suffer it: he bore my curse, to redeem me from the curse of the law: he was forsaken of God his

Father, that I might never be forsaken: he died to give me life: he rose again, to take possession of life for me: he ascended in our nature, and is glorified in it. What he has, I shall have: his honours, his crown and dignity, his fulness of joy and bliss—all, all are mine. What he is, what he was, is for me: for he is God, my Saviour. Happy, thrice happy, Mary, virgin mother! Yea, happy, thrice happy too, Mrs. ——. Is not the new-born King your King? Is not the child Jesus your God? He is, he is; you cannot deny it. Oh, come then, my dear friend, let us praise his precious name, and let us magnify his love together. Soon, yet a very little while, and we shall be with him; we shall be like him. Oh, what a thought is that—like him! Yes, when we come where he is, the glory of that sun of righteousness will shine upon us, yea, will shine into us, and he will make us what he is. We shall then be happy partakers of all that was with delight in the breast of Jehovah from eternity; all will be fulfilled. The Father's richest love, the most exalted grace of the Spirit, will flow, through the infinitely blessed Immanuel, into all his glorified members. This is the accomplishment of the everlasting covenant. In this the eternal Three will take eternal delight. Jehovah will rest in his love. And through that God-man will the Godhead have full, perfect, and everlasting glory, honour, worship, blessing, and praise, from the full choir. You will sing aloud, in as high a key as any one of them all. Complain you may, and of yourself you ought; but then it will be all praise—all wonder—that you should be chosen, elect of God, partaker of his covenant-love: this distinguishing grace will make you a happy, willing debtor to Immanuel, for ever and ever.

Thus, looking backward or forward, I see all the purposes and works of God bearing respect to this wonderful person. He was set up from everlasting as the Alpha, and he will be to everlasting the Omega; for in all things he must have the pre-eminence. He has it above. Oh that we may ascribe more of it to him below: and you will, if you can pierce with the eagle eye of faith within the veil. There you will behold Immanuel enthroned, and all the host of heaven worshipping at his feet, admiring and adoring, because sharing in, his divine excellencies. The beauty of this sight makes an eternal heaven. Then, if your faith has any ears to hear, listen. Oh what melody do they make!—what notes do these golden harps strike!—what voices accompany them!—what a harmony! The words I understand: they are singing salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever. But their manner of singing is peculiar to the place. The air can form no such sounds: they can be only in the element of heaven. When your faith comes down from this high flight, and it is not capable of being long there, then look around you; and whatever object your eyes first fix upon, if they be spiritually exercised, you will see some ray of our Immanuel's glory. The book of nature is the outward record of his fame. Some of his great achievements are engraved in every part of the creation. The sun, moon, and stars, the earth, with all its productions, in full concert join the choir above, and in perfect unison sound forth the glory of our Immanuel. And suppose I direct your eye to an object which I know you do not like to look at—YOURSELF, even there I can find (Oh! that you may,) as great a proof of the Redeemer's glory as any where else upon earth: for, what are you? Are you not a poor, miserable, helpless sinner? His crown depends upon his saving such. What do you feel within you? Tell all your complaints. These just fit you to live upon the Saviour's fulness. Look at your outward estate: tell me that part of it which does not display the Saviour's glory. What does fortune say, and health, and friends? (I put myself in.) Let me be their mouth:—*We are all the gifts of Jesus' rich love—love him for bestowing us upon you; and the more you have, love him more.* And, mind, you cannot, you never will, love him too much. Try, put forth all your strength; he will still be above your affection, the best, the utmost of it. I wish you much of his company this Christmas: many a sweet visit from him. When you are very familiar, put a word in for me. Oh, how I long to be more intimate with him. But he is kind indeed; exceedingly kind. Dearest, dearest Jesus! May he never leave you without some token of his love!—Paper fails.—Farewell.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXXV.

LAMBETH, *Jan.* 18, 1763.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I often remember you in the best place, and for the best purposes, but cannot bring myself to love writing of letters; yet I have again taken up my pen, to wish you every spiritual blessing purchased by the life and death of our incarnate God, and that will make you as happy as you can be on this side of heaven. In this new year, may you grow in the knowledge of the excellency of his most adorable person, of his complete finished salvation, and of your own particular interest in it; and, having these believing views, may you glorify him by living happily upon his fulness! I know a little of these matters, and but little; yet I am sitting, abashed at my ignorance, at my Master's feet. He has made me willing to hear his words; and I find his lips so full of grace, that I cannot spare a moment for my Homer or Virgil, my favourite Tully or Demosthenes. Adieu for ever to all the classics. I see a heavenly life, as well as a matchless beauty, in my Lord's words; and though I am a dull scholar, yet he is a blessed master. He keeps me waiting upon him day by day, trusting nothing to my own understanding, but listening continually to his instruction; so he gets all the glory of making me wise unto salvation. To this great prophet may you repair for instruction all this year! He teaches, as never man taught. His doctrine is with power and demonstration of the Spirit. He can so humble your pride, that you shall be as dependent upon him as a new-born babe; and then having emptied you of your own carnal reason and false wisdom, he will enlighten you, by his word and Spirit, with saving truth. Here the humblest scholar learns the most; indeed he has learnt the most; for our highest lesson is to learn how to live upon him, who was made of God unto us wisdom; and he who relies most upon him for that wisdom will certainly be the wisest. If the whole world was mine, and I could purchase what I would with it, I would give it all to be a scholar made poor in spirit at Christ's feet. And what then can I wish my dear friend better than to be one of his little children, whom he teaches his mind and will? Only I could wish you more humbled, that you may may more perfectly learn the two blessed truths which he is exalted to teach his people; namely, to believe in his blood and righteousness, and to live upon his grace and power.

His prophetical office is to teach us how to be always *safe* by believing in him, and always *happy* by living upon him. He has the residue of the Spirit with him, and he sends him into the believer's heart, to be always preaching this most comfortable doctrine, that whatever he wants for his acceptance at the bar of justice, it is perfectly to be had, and freely in the fulness of the Lord Christ. Sins as red as scarlet, sins as numerous as the stars, or as the sand upon the sea-shore innumerable, and nature as black as hell, a heart as wicked as the devil, the divine and eternally precious blood of Jesus can so cleanse and purify, that not one spot shall remain; for he is Almighty. He has all power in heaven and earth to pardon sin. If I had been guilty of all the sins of Adam and Eve, and of all their descendants to this day, yet believing in him I should be safe, because his blood cleanseth from all sin. And in Christ the believer has a better righteousness than that of the angels; theirs is finite, his is infinite:—a better righteousness than that of our first parents in paradise; theirs was the righteousness of a creature, and they lost it; this is the righteousness of God, and it is an everlasting righteousness, never to be lost. It is the righteousness in which the saints stand before God for ever and ever. When the Holy Spirit takes of these things of Christ, and preaches them to the heart, oh, what a sweet peace follows!—for the believer then finds himself saved from all the miseries of sin, and entitled to all the blessings of eternal glory; and, being thus persuaded of his safety by believing in the atoning blood of our great High Priest, then the Holy Spirit teaches him how to live upon Christ, and how to make use of Christ's fulness. On our learning this lesson depends our comfortable walk heaven-wards: for Christ does not give us a stock of grace, and expect us to improve it by being faithful to grace given. No, no; that is not his way. Our

souls must depend upon him, as our bodies do upon the elements of this world. Every moment we must live by faith upon his fulness, and be every moment receiving out of it grace for grace. And this is our happiness—to have all in Christ. A beggar in myself, but rich with unsearchable, eternal riches in him. Ignorant still in myself, but led and taught by his unerring wisdom. A sinner still, but believing in his blood and righteousness. Weak and helpless still, but kept by his almighty love. Nothing but sorrow in myself, nothing but joy in him. Oh, this is a blessed life. No tongue can tell what a heaven it is, thus to live by faith upon the Son of God. Thanks be to him, I know a little of it; and I cannot but heartily pray that you may know more of it this year than you ever did. Surely I could not have thought, some years ago, that there was such an heaven upon earth as I now find. Blessings for ever on the Lamb! May you find it more and more! Sweet Jesus keep you, my dear friend! Yours,

W. Romaine

LETTER CCXXVI.

Lambeth, *March* 26, 1763.

Thanks to my dear friend for her kind letter this morning. The subject inquired after, is what I have been long exercised about, both in my own soul and in my ministry: and for the sake of weak believers, and to save myself great trouble in continually conversing with these persons, I resolved to write a little treatise upon the subject. I trust my time and strength, what I have and am, is now the Lord's. I wish he may use me as he pleases, for his own glory. My writings are to set forth his praise, and to exalt his salvation. The inclosed plan will show you what I propose: and, to make it more easy to be understood, I shall relate it by way of experience, giving an account of the "Life of Faith," as it was begun in one of my acquaintance, and carried on to this day, he being now a father in Christ; and I shall make remarks upon it as I go on. The subject is but little known. I pray you, my dear friend, forget not me, nor my book. Beg of the Lord Christ to bless it. If he smile upon it, it will be useful to his people. That is my highest wish. May it be profitable and useful to your soul!

I have many letters to write to-night, and yet I could not help acknowledging the receipt of yours. To a precious Jesus I commend you. To his love and to his power leave all your matters. What cannot, what will not he do for you, if you do but trust him? Are they not all happy in heaven? It is his happiness. They have it from him. Trust him, and he will not only bring you safe there, but also make you happy by the way. Oh, what a savour is there in his name! I did but just mention him, and I can scarce stop my pen, his love so warms my heart. Dear precious Jesus! thou art above all blessing and praise; fill my friend's heart with thy love, and make her rejoice in thy finished salvation. My kind respects to Miss ——: and pray tell her she cannot possibly think too highly of Christ, nor love him too much, nor live too much by faith upon him. His salvation is infinite and eternal: the love of him for his salvation is heaven upon earth; and living by faith upon him, for the present graces and the future glories of this salvation, is getting every moment fresh tokens of his love to us, and exciting fresh love to him. In short, I wish she may be married to Christ; and then, his person being hers, his honours, his estate, and all he has, will be hers also. Once more, to that dearest of all names, Jesus, I commend you; and am yours unfeignedly for his sake,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXVII.

LAMBETH, *May* 14, 1763.

BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed you with so many blessings already, and who, having begun, will not cease to bless you in life and death, and for evermore! Your letter of May 2nd puts me in mind of his goodness, as I wish all things may. It rejoices my very heart to see him displaying the glories of his grace far and wide. From London through Europe, from Europe to America, yea, as far as the sun travels, his fame is spread. And does he not deserve it? Oh, my friend, what have we to tell of but the loving-kindness of Jesus; and what to praise, but his wonders in saving such as we are, and in saving so many of us? Blessings for ever on the Lamb! May we glorify him by resting upon him for righteousness and strength, and by living wholly upon him for grace and glory. Then all goes well, when

> On all besides his precious blood,
> On all besides the Son of God,
> We trample boldly, and disclaim
> All other saviours but the LAMB.

As to what you write about, I know not what to say. It is in the best hands. He knows what to do. Let him alone. Remember he is the Head of the church, and he will look after his own matters, and well too. At present I see not my way clearly from London. Here my Master fixes me, and here I must stay till he call me to some other place. When he would have me to move, he will let me know his will. Besides, what am I? What does it signify where I am? A poor dumb dog, the vilest, the basest, of all the servants of my Lord. If you could see what is passing for any one hour in my heart, you would not think any thing of me; you would only admire and extol the riches of Jesus' love. Wonderful it is that he should set his heart upon such a very incarnate devil, and humble me so as to make me willing to be saved by his sovereign grace; and that he should send such an one to preach his gospel, and bless it, too, to many, many souls (while every sermon covers me with shame and confusion.) Oh, this is wonderful, wonderful, eternally to be admired grace! What cannot he do, who can form a preacher out of such a dry rotten stick, fit for nothing but the fire of hell? Glory, glory be to him alone, and for ever, and for evermore. All the tongues in heaven and in earth, men and angels, throughout eternity, cannot praise him enough for what he has already done for my soul, and therefore I am, and I am content to be, a poor broken bankrupt debtor for ever. Hereby I shall be enabled for ever to exalt him, and to put the crown upon his head, and that is all I want. It will be heaven enough to join that blessed company, who are crying, "Worthy is the Lamb (but none else) to receive blessing and glory," &c. Nothing is mentioned among them but Jesus' goodness, and he does not leave himself without witness among us poor sinners. He has been doing miracles of mercy for Lady H——; and as she herself says, "In the midst of judgment he remembered mercy." You have heard, I suppose, of Lady S——'s illness. She had a violent fever for about seventeen days, and the physicians did not apprehend she was in any great danger, although she was near her end. On Thursday morning, about four o'clock, the Lord took her to himself. "Oh, what a stroke was that," say you, "to Lady H——!" No, indeed, it was all mercy, all love, like the rest of Jesus' gracious dealings with his people. During her illness, Lady H—— had every day many promises given her of God's kindness to her daughter; all which she interpreted in a carnal sense, like the Jews, and thought her daughter would recover, and do well again. By this means she was wonderfully supported, and her spirits were kept up to the last. And when the Lord let her see things were otherwise intended than she thought, then he had prepared for her a fresh fund of comfort. For such was Lady S——'s behaviour, and such her speeches, from the beginning of her illness, that there is no doubt but she died happy in the

arms of Jesus. My dear friend, if I had time to tell you all the particulars of her death, your soul would abundantly rejoice, and all that is within you would bless the God of your salvation. To him she committed herself, trusted him, found him faithful, and declared, over and over again, that in him she was happy. Her last words to her mother, when she took her leave were these: Lady H—— had said, "My dearest child, how do you feel your heart? Are you happy?" —She answered, lifting up her head from the pillow, which she had not done for several days, "I am happy, exceedingly happy in Jesus"—then she kissed Lady H——, and presently went home. Although my lady bears this loss so well, yet she feels it. She is but a woman, and though a gracious one, yet grace does not destroy nature. She is a parent, and at present incapable of writing. I am yours in Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXVIII.

My dear Madam.—I cannot resist the opportunity, though I can write but two or three lines, to thank you for your last letter, and for your kindness to me expressed in it. I thank God for the contents. What you say of yourself is to me very comfortable, because I see how the Spirit of God is leading you. He is taking you up into the highest form in the school of Christ, and is teaching you an experience which is not only next to glory, but is also glory begun. This being the hardest to learn, no wonder you should complain. I take notice of your account of your present state, of your trials, and of the exercises of your faith. A great part of your letter is upon these points, describing your self-abasement and loathing at the sight and sense of what you are in yourself, and wondering that such an one as you should be brought to know, to believe in, and to love our Jesus.

Now, my good friend, I must tell you, if you had written to me, and desired me to give you the character of a true Christian, I should have copied it from your letter. I could not have left one circumstance out. All that you mention of your being tried, afflicted in body and mind, brought low, and kept low; sometimes mourning at the strength of corruption, and at the weakness of your graces; at your love to earthly relations, and at your love to our Jesus—one so strong, the other so weak; your trials on these, and many other such like accounts, are such as no true disciple of Christ, in your circumstances, could be without. My answer should have been, "He is exactly what Mrs. —— says she is." For in reading the scripture I can find but these two things spoken of the office of the Holy Spirit: he first enables the sinner to receive Christ by faith; and then to live upon him, so received, for all things. If you examine these two rules carefully, you will see that all the teachings of the Holy Spirit may be reduced to them; and if you examine yourself by the light of the word, you will have no doubt but that you are among them to whom the promise was made: all thy children shall be taught of God. For, have you not renounced your righteousness as well as your sins? Have you no more dependence on your good works than on your bad works? Is not the holy nature of our Immanuel, his infinitely holy life, his everlastingly precious death—is not this complete work of his the only ground of your hope? "O yes," say you, "on this rock I lay my foundation; I build all on it for time and for eternity." Very well! then certain it is, the Holy Spirit has done his first work in you. He has enabled you to receive Christ; now he is carrying on his work, the second part of the same lesson, which is enabling you to live upon Christ received. This is very hard to learn; it is against nature; against our natural love for law and works, our legal lookings at self, our foolish hope, If I live longer I shall be better. Oh it is hard, I find it to this hour, like leaping overboard in a storm, to cast myself simply on Jesus for every thing; but it must be done. The Spirit abides with you for this purpose—"that he may take of the things of Christ, and show them to you, and

so glorify him." When he is teaching this heavenly truth, we kick against it, we pervert it. When we go on the best, we think we are at the worst. But he abides, to conquer our opposition, to set right what we pervert, and to convince us all is and shall be well. May he thus bless a word spoken to the Saviour's glory!

My dear friend, you know it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in our Jesus: it pleases the Spirit to witness of it, and to glorify it. How? in what way?—why, just as he is teaching you. He is bringing you to live out of yourself upon the fulness of Jesus. Mind how he does it. He shows you first that you want such a thing; then that you cannot get it any where but from Jesus, and then he leads you to think, that, trusting to his faithful word, you may experience how ready his heart, how able his hand, is to supply all your need. This is a beggar's life; here is nothing but alms. We do not like it. We want some stock; if we could get it, we should like an independent fortune. But it cannot be. The Spirit of Jesus will witness of nothing, and glorify nothing but the Saviour's all-sufficient grace; and therefore he sets himself against all our greatness and goodness—that he who glorieth may glory only in the Lord Christ. And when he is bringing us to this true glorifying of the Lord, we mistake, we pervert his lessons; I know I do, and I think you do. We both fail in our our experience, as your letter clearly proves to me.

If you ask me, how you may become a better scholar? as I have been taught, I would gladly inform you.

Read and pray for more self-knowledge: God's word and Spirit will teach you nothing about yourself, but what will humble you to the dust, and keep you there. Read and pray for more knowledge of Jesus, of his person God-man—his salvation-work infinitely and everlastingly perfect: he is yours, now he is received, and all he has, and all he is, as Jesus, yours in title, and, so far as you believe, yours now in possession.

Read and pray for more faith, that what you have a title to, you may take possession of, and so make constant use of it. Your estate is great, immensely great. Use it and live up to it: as you do in temporals, so do in spirituals. Your money, your land, your air, your light, your meat and drink, and house and clothing, these you use: but you have not them *in* you; only, being yours, they are used *by* you. So do by Christ. When the Spirit would glorify Jesus, he humbles you. When he would glorify his fulness, he makes you feel your emptiness. When he would bring you to rely on his strength, he convinces you of your weakness. When he would magnify the comforts of Jesus, he makes you sensible of your misery. When he would fix your heart on his heaven, he makes you feel you deserved hell. When he would exalt his righteousness, you find you are a poor miserable sinner. Can you, my friend, practise this? let nothing keep you from Jesus. Whatever you need, whatever you feel wrong, may it bring you to the Saviour's fulness! Oh that all things may help forward your acquaintance with him! I except nothing, neither sin nor sorrow; I would carry all to him, as one great lump of sin, and receive all good from him, as the only storehouse of good for wretched sinners. In this communion I desire to grow; for this I desire to live. Oh that you and I may learn it more, and get every day nearer fellowship with our sweet Jesus—growing up into him in all things.

See how my pen runs on as fast I can write. My very heart and soul are enamoured with him! I love his name; I adore his person: he is my heaven. Oh what treasures are there in our Jesus! May his glorious Spirit witness for him to your heart. Believe me your very sincere friend, a well-wisher in that matchless lover of sinners, and of the chief of them,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXIX.

BRIGHTHELMSTONE, *Sept.* 1, 1763.

I HAVE at last got a spare hour to write to my dear friends at ———, and to tell them how much I wish all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus may be theirs.

Since I left you, all has been hurry, travelling from place to place, till kind providence has brought me to Brighthelmstone, where I hope for a little rest—not so much to my soul; blessed be the grace of sweet Jesus, I have that—but rest from distraction, hurry, dust, heat, and want of sleep. This is a kind of haven after a storm. Not that I expect a continual calm here: it would be a sad place indeed if there were no enemies, no warfare, no trials and troubles in it. These I must have wherever I go; because they grow in my constitution, and are nourished in the body of sin; and because without them I should not know how to prize Christ. But I find my retired and private times are the best for my own soul, as more public times are for others: and yet that sweetest blessed Jesus, when I am in his work, takes care of me; and when I am watering others, he does not leave me unwatered myself. I am a witness for him. I have been preaching of his salvation many years in the midst of a crowd, living all the time in a great hurry; and yet I gain every year some fresh knowledge of myself, some more knowledge of my incarnate God, and some steadier trust and dependence upon him; and I can say it is good for me that I have been a poor despised preacher of Christ Jesus.

Now, what can I wish my dear friend more for her peace and blessedness, than that the dear Saviour may do for her what he has done for me, only in a greater degree? For I am sure it is a growing thing. In the knowledge of ourselves we may certainly increase. There is a mystery of iniquity in us, which we shall not perfectly comprehend so long as we live. But as we make fresh discoveries of it, we shall see our want more of Christ, and thereby get more knowledge of the great mystery of godliness. The sense of our manifold wants, will magnify the riches of his grace in supplying them. So, the lower man is abased, the higher is the Saviour exalted. And this will of course bring us to make more use of him, to trust him more, and to live more upon him, which is the blessedness of faith. When I feel the depth of my distress and wants, and the infinite riches of Jesus' grace to supply them, then faith does its office aright, when it is not discouraged by a sense of many increasing wants, but is thereby made to cleave closer to Jesus, and to prize him more. This is my present state; and in it I have at times a pleasure which cannot be described. The height of Jesus' grace is so exactly suited to the depth of my distress, that I am ready to glory in it. I would not be without one single want. My wants are my happiness. They make Christ so exceedingly desirable, that fresh wants add to him in my eyes fresh beauty. It is a pleasure to be in his debt—yea, the greatest I know of. I would not have inherent righteousness, if I could get it for nothing. I would not be rich, and increase in goods, and have need of nothing from him, if it was possible. His glory is my heart's delight; and therefore I love to glorify him, by living upon his fulness. I nothing—he all in all. When it is thus with me, I am safe and happy. I am the greatest fool that ever lived—I feel it! and that makes his wisdom so precious. I am the chief of sinners—I find it daily; and that makes his blood and righteousness my continual delight. I have as many evil tempers as the devil: Oh, how they stir, and fight against the Spirit! But Jesus is my sanctification. He has given them their death's wound! and by and by they will expire and be no more. In myself I deserve hell every moment; but Jesus is my redemption, my eternal redemption. Oh, how my heart loves him! He knows it well. And if I am ever vouchsafed (why should I doubt it?) to see him face to face, I will acknowledge him to be all in all, and rejoice to acknowledge it for ever. And it will be the very heaven of heavens (truly I taste something of heaven in thinking of it) to give him the glory of my crown, and to lay it low at his feet.—*Worthy is the Lamb.* Thanks be to him, I can sing this

song now, but in a poor strain to what I hope to do soon. Sweet Jesus bring you and me safe to the eternal enjoyment of him and his glory.

I am sorry to stop, to tell you of two parcels I left at ———, one for you, and another for Mr. ——, I hope they are come safe to hand. Inclosed in yours was a Field's Bible, the best present I could think of for your kindness to me, and another little pocket Bible for dear ——. One favour would I beg, if you would grant it me; and that is, for you both to read the Bible over once in these little keepsakes. I have many reasons for asking this favour; but one is peculiar to myself, namely, that it will often put you in mind of your faithful friend in the bond of the Spirit,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXXX.

BRIGHTHELMSTONE, *Sept.* 26, 1763.

THE presence of dear Jesus be with my dear friend—that presence which turns darkness into light, sin into righteousness, misery into heaven. What can you want, if he be with you? He has such a miraculous virtue, that he can turn your weakness into strength, your mourning into joy, your death into life; so that there is not in you any evil effect of sin, but his almighty grace can make it work under him for his glory and for your good. Oh! may this presence be with you as long as you are in this state of weakness, and mourning, and death. Sweet Jesus keep you; nay, I know he will. His tender, loving heart, loves to the end. Oh, my friend, what a Saviour is he! Oh, how I love him! He knows I do; and yet I am ashamed to think how far below his deserts. By and by I shall do better, when you and I meet before his throne; then, then——But I stop.

"Would—— be worthy my acceptance?" The worth of it does not come before me, but what my Master expects of me. His will must be my rule; and it has been a long time as plain to me as that two and two make four. I am stationed by myself. I am alone in London: and while he keeps me there, I dare not move; as, when he has a mind to remove me, my way will be as plain from London as it is now to abide in it. If I hearkened to self, and wanted to run away from the cross, I know of no place so snug as ——; but would you have me such a coward as to fly, and such an one to stand by me—*one* who has kept me in many battles, and *one* who, I trust, will presently make me more than conqueror.

I have not time to answer your letter in other points. Only be assured of my prayers (such as they are) for your reading the Bible. Remember again, Christ is the sum and substance of it all. May his Spirit breathe upon it as you read, and lead you beyond the letter to the life-giving sense.

I have great faith about ——. You *will* be taken care of. Do not doubt it. The government is on Christ's shoulders, and he does all things well. Leave it to him. But he does use means; therefore pray write as soon as you have fixed on a proper person. My kind love to dear Mr. ——. I wish him as happy as my master can make him, and then he will be one of the happiest men in this world. Our friends with you have my hearty good wishes for their better acquaintance with the precious Lord Jesus, and more faith to get more out of his fulness. To him I commend you all, and your present case at ——; and am, with my wife's respects, for his sake, your faithful friend and servant,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXXXI.

LAMBETH, *April* 17, 1764

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I have just now received your letter, and thank you for the kindness you express in it to me. I am pretty well in health, and loaded

with benefits—nothing but mercy, rich mercy every day. All the dealings of my most precious Jesus with my soul are grace and love. He not only promises, and by faith makes me rely upon him for heaven, but now, even now, I am as it were in heaven; for I live upon his heavenly blessings. Vile and base as I am, yet he lets me approach him, and converse with him freely. He vouchsafes to admit me into fellowship with him, and he opens his treasures, and says, "All these are thine; I bought them for thee with the price of my blood, but I give them to thee as a free gift. Take this for the earnest—accept this for the pledge of all the rest; and all mine are thine." Yes, Lord, I believe it: on thy word do I trust, and I rely upon thy faithfulness to make it good to me. I desire to glorify thee amidst all my wants, and sins, and miseries, by living out of myself upon thine infinite fulness. Empty me still more, blessed Lord! be daily emptying me more, that I may be capable of holding more of thy good things. What do you think of this? is it not heaven begun? What is heaven, but the perfection of this life of grace? Believers now live with Christ; they now live upon Christ. Christ is their all; for the life which they now live in the flesh, they live by the faith of the Son of God: and what a blessed life this is I have in some small degree experienced; and what the Lord has taught me I have endeavoured to set forth, and make public, for his glory, and the comfort of weak believers. The little book is finished. May my ever dear Jesus shine upon every page as you read it, and strengthen your faith, and warm your heart with his heavenly love. I beg your prayers for a blessing on this book: I beseech you do not forget it, for your own sakes and mine, and all the household of faith. To Jesus' love I commend you and Mr. ——; and am, by many ties, your servant in the gospel,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXXII.

July 3, 1764.

I have my dear friend's letter of the 19th of June by me, and thank you for it. You may be sure I am glad to hear the little book agrees with what God has taught you: not glad for the author's sake, but for Christ's sake, and for yours —*for Christ's sake*, because I live, and preach, and write, to exalt that royal Saviour: oh! how my heart longs to see him crowned in your soul, when you will go forth as the command is, and see king Solomon with the crown of grace and glory on his head, wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart; then all within you will gladly bow to his sceptre. And *for your sake*, because he has begun to be crowned, since you say you have experienced some of the things in this little book. I wish I may help you, God helping me, to experience more of the glorious majesty of our King of kings, when I come down and preach at —— upon that text; and when I am setting forth that sovereign Prince and Saviour, may his Spirit then crown him in your conscience, and enthrone him in your heart. But I cannot come the day you mention, because it is my last Sunday at St. Dunstan's; and the week after, I go down to Brighthelmstone, and shall be there for a fortnight, and then set out for your place.

Till that time come, I will be wishing you what I am always desiring for myself, a stronger sense and clearer feeling of my wants, and more faith to live upon Jesus for the supply of them. When you have nothing in yourself to be pleased with, all wretchedness and helplessness, then should Jesus be most precious—he being the Almighty Saviour of such a wretched helpless creature. A man that has a plentiful table thinks it a happiness that he sits down hungry and thirsty—so should you, when every thing within you is saying—"Here you can do nothing, there you can do nothing, *without Christ*." Then faith should say, It is true, I cannot; but he has in him that very thing which I want, and he has promised to give it me, and on him I depend for it. Such a dependence is heaven upon earth. I find it so: nor would I have it otherwise. What would become of me, if I was rich and increased with goods, and found no need of any thing? Why, then I should not feel my want of Christ; I could not live upon him, and

so should become comfortless. My dear friend, believe me, I have been trying all ways to happiness, but all have failed me, till this one—and here I am settled. I want nothing but Christ. People tell me, I must submit to this ordinance, and be joined to such a church, and come under church discipline, and must be dipped, &c. &c. I have Christ—I want no more. This is making Christ of him. And this saves us from ten thousand thousand snares and troubles in life. I assure you, it has brought me such peace, as I scarce thought it possible to have in this world. Excuse me, then, when I wish you poorer and poorer every day, that you may be richer in Christ. I shall not cease to remember you as above, till your hear farther from yours in that most sweet and lovely Christ, the fairest, yea, the very beauty itself, of all the fair. Oh! how I love him, and he loves a poor wretch.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXXXIII.

HARTLEPOOL, *Aug.* 7, 1764.

I RECEIVED my dear friend's letter, and think she overlooks our ever adorable Jesus, in setting any value upon a poor dirty worm. If his grace raise it from a dunghill, and set it upon a throne with his princes, who shall have the glory,—the worm, or Jesus? Shall any of his due praise be given to it? God forbid! There ought to be an holy jealousy in you and me, that we rob not our God of his glory. If we do rob him of ever so little, he will wither all our comforts and graces; but if we give him all the glory, which we cannot do unless he be all and we be nothing, then every thing will go well with us. We get exalted as we are humbled. The lowest is the highest; which makes me fear to look at any good in myself, unless the kind hand which gave it me be seen at the same time; and afraid to hear of any thing good in myself, unless I am sure my *Master* has all the praise. The plan upon which I act herein, is this: (long experience and many humblings have brought me to it.) I have grieved to see how much of my time ran to waste, partly for want of knowing what to do, and partly through perplexity about what was done, lest it was not done aright; and therefore I was led to endeavour to bring the business of every day into a little compass, that, at one view, I might satisfy myself whether I had answered the end of living, another day.

There is no doubt left about my belonging to Christ; so that this matter is not to be brought into court again. It has been tried and determined, and is now a settled point. What have I then to do? What is the work of every day? Why, it is to be living still in a constant dependence upon the Lord Christ, and to be growing every day in the knowledge and experience of that dependence.

The dependence is thus expressed, "The just shall live by his faith:" being justified, or made just, he shall not live by any works, by any stock of grace, by being faithful to any talents received, but he shall live upon the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, receiving from him continually grace for grace

The believer's growth in this his dependence is thus spoken of; "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God our Saviour." Grace is the free love of God to poor sinners in the whole plan of salvation—from first to last, all is of grace; and in the knowledge and experience of this there is a growth. The believer learns more clearly that all is of grace, and that he has no hand in saving himself, but an empty receiving hand. Grace comes to pull him down, and to set Christ up. When the heart is established with grace, the creature is stripped quite bare, without a rag to put on, or money to buy any, or wisdom to know where to get it. Grace pulls down all high things, levels all distinctions, and leaves the poor creature nothing at all to trust in, or to boast of, but to live upon Christ's alms: so that the sense of our lost, guilty, helpless state, is the only thing which can make us willing to receive a whole Christ, and the abiding sense of this will keep us willing to live upon a whole Christ. And while a believer lives thus, how can he grow in grace, if he be not discovering every day more of

the depth of iniquity which is in him? Grace cannot be magnified, unless nature be humbled. Jesus Christ cannot become more precious, unless *self* becomes more vile. As the believer sinks in his own eyes, Christ rises in his esteem. And this, in my opinion, is growing in grace. Growing in the sense of our weakness, magnifies Christ's strength—our sinfulness his righteousness—our folly his wisdom—our misery his happiness—our outward sorrowful state, his inward peace and joy. Thus the growth in the knowledge of Christ is closely connected with the knowledge of self. And that makes me afraid of any thing which tends to weaken this view of things; because it would weaken my dependence upon Christ. I should not see nor feel my want of him so much, which would stop the working of faith, and thereby eclipse the glory of Jesus. You see my jealousy. And indeed I have great reason for it. After all my experience, which you have read in the "Life of Faith," I have a revolting heart. Still I would turn from and live without Christ, if I could. Pride puts me upon it. Oh, it is the very devil, that pride; it attacks not the heel, but the heart of Christ, and wants to rob him of his crown. And I have so smarted for it, that the most distant approach is terrible to me. Think what you will of me, but never mention me without mentioning the grace of my dearest Lord, who has made me all that I ever shall be, but sin and misery.

My sweet Jesus hath contrived so much work for me in these parts, and he is so evidently and powerfully with us, that I cannot leave my neighbours, who crowd to hear, far more than ever, and they are to me as my own soul. We are beyond all description happy in our loving, lovely Lord. Such meetings I never knew—and twice a day—and many churches open. Oh! that I could but stay—I am so knit in heart to my neighbours, and the most of them come and sit quietly to hear, that I know not how to leave them. But it must be. Adieu, my friend; remember yours in our precious Immanuel,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXXIV.

Dec. 29, 1764.

All the blessings of this good season be with my dear friend. That man, for whom Christ was born, is the greatest, richest prince upon earth—his revenues, his honours, his mighty allies, his everlasting kingdom, are beyond all conception. Compared to what he is and has, crowns and empires are but playthings for little children. And he comes to all his dignity by Jehovah's taking flesh, through which wonderful event he can be made one spirit with him: he took our flesh that we might take his spirit—he was born on earth, that we might have a new birth from heaven—he took our sins, that we might take his righteousness—and our miseries, that we might be heirs with him of his happiness. Oh, what an astonishing transaction is this! How full of the richest grace, flowing over with everlasting love! This great and blessed event lay in the breast of Jehovah in eternity. He ever had it in his heart; it was his beloved plan and purpose that he would take flesh, and display all the glories of his Godhead in the person of Jesus Christ. This was his gracious will and everlasting counsel, to which all his works have tended, and for the executing of which in its full perfection all things are now working together. When the fulness of time was come, oh, what joy was there in heaven among the angels, who kept their first estate! They thought it a very high honour to be the messengers of it, even to poor shepherds, with whom they could rejoice, that their God and our God was become incarnate.—"Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy,"—glad tidings, indeed; for they include all the good which infinite mercy has to give, and the sinner can receive. Hereby light comes to them who are sitting in darkness, and life to them who are in the shadow of death, pardon to the guilty, comfort to the mourning, liberty to the captives, strength to the helpless, and heaven to the miserable. How blessed a change do they experience, when by faith they know

and can say, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given!" For this is the saving truth, *Jesus is the Christ*, the man is Jehovah, God and man in one Christ, the child born is the mighty God, and the Son given is the everlasting Father—the Virgin's Son is Immanuel, God with us, and her infant babe is her eternal Saviour. Except she had believed this, she could not have been saved, nor can we; and yet it is a truth so far out of the reach of man's understanding, that he never could have thought of it, unless it had been revealed; nor can he now comprehend it, unless he be taught it of God, for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, is Jehovah, but by the Holy Ghost. Here, then, my dear friend, is matter of thankfulness to you and me, that we are taught this of God. Happy Christmas to us, since we have lived to hear and understand the great mystery of godliness—*God manifest in the flesh.* Happier still, that we believe it; for whomsoever the Holy Ghost enlightens with the knowledge of this saving truth, he also gives faith to receive it, to trust in Christ as God, to depend upon him as the Almighty Saviour, to rely upon his finished work, and to lay no other foundation for any grace or glory, but the life and death of this ever blessed God-man. This is the way in which the Holy Ghost glorifies Jesus, he gives the believer such views of the infinite fulness and everlasting sufficiency of Immanuel, that he is quite satisfied with him. His conscience is brought into sweet peace through the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb of God; and when guilt would arise, and unbelieving fears disturb, he is enabled through faith in Jesus to maintain his peace: because whatever rendered him hateful to God, he sees it removed by his adorable surety; and whatever God could love him for, he finds himself interested in it through the infinitely precious obedience of the Lord our righteousness. Thus he enters into the promised rest; thus he maintains himself in it. He can desire nothing, but the Saviour has it; and when he asks, he receives it from him: so that the Saviour more than fills up all his wants—for he satisfies all his wishes: he says, by sweet experience—"This is all my salvation, and all my desire."

And what greatly adds still to this happiness is, that it is ever, ever growing—may you and I find it so! As the believer is made to see his absolute safety in Jesus, so does he partake more of his graces and blessings. In hearing and reading the descriptions of the Lord Christ in his divine person, and in his most gracious offices, the Holy Spirit sets in with those descriptions, and presents the inestimably glorious Saviour before the eye of faith with the most attracting loveliness. All the sweets, and beauties, and joys scattered throughout the universe are only little drops out of the ocean of Jesus' fulness. There is not any object made to gratify any sense, but the Holy Spirit shows the believer that very thing in its highest perfection in the infinitely rich Saviour, and gives him a delightful earnest, and by faith a foretaste of it. By which means his whole heart and soul grow entirely in love with that beauty of all beauties, and he says, and it is heaven to feel it, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend."

I have more, far more to say, but —— is waiting. Pray, my dear friend, leave for ever out of your mind and writing "if I knew—if I believe." Oh, why do you doubt? The good Lord keep you and yours. I am, in bonds which cannot be broken, yours in Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXXV.

Feb. 14, 1765.

My dear Friend.—I shall be filling up this paper with—First, Thanking my dear master for his great kindness to you. From my heart I praise him—may you and yours give him the whole glory of his temporal and spiritual blessings.

Secondly, I pray him to continue his kindness to you—a thankful temper always has fresh matter for thankfulness. To praise him for the past, is the sure way to secure future mercies. Prayer and praise live and die together.

Thirdly, I tell you of his goodness to me. I am nothing but a miracle of his goodness—the most astonishing that ever was! All, all, from my first breath to this I am now drawing, is mere mercy and grace, and so it will be for ever and for ever. My ministry is wonderful, that such a dumb dog should speak—such a very devil in flesh should feel what he says of that eternally precious Jesus, and be the means of making others feel it, and should have no doubt of feeling it blessedly to eternity. Oh, what delightful views do these things give me of my sweetest Lord and dearest Jesus! He seems willing I should preach more, and have a church in the city: but he will not let it come too easily, lest we should have whereof to glory. We are at law about it, and are like to be a great while, but in the mean time he is doing all things well. The very moment all things are ready, the church will be opened: and if it never is, he does not want me there, with which I am satisfied.

Fourthly, Does all this teach you and me to trust this dear Lamb of God? It should teach us; I hope it does. How safely may we trust his faithfulness; how happily rest upon his almighty love. All things for the good of soul and body are promised to him that believeth. Oh, that the Lord may increase your faith and mine! In an hour of need may you find him very, very near to your heart, and filling you with joy and peace in believing.

To Jesus I commend you and yours most heartily, being tied to you in him by the bonds of his everlasting love. Jesus bless you. Amen.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXXVI.

May 25, 1765.

My dear Friend.—Having an opportunity of sending a note by dear Mr. ——, I could not withhold my pen. What thanks ought we to give to our gracious Lord for his mercies to you? What ought you yourself to give? Can you look back upon any part of your life, especially the last part of it, and is there any thing upon which you cannot write, "this is mercy?" Oh, it is all, from first to last, to them who are chosen, and called, and believe, and live by faith of the Son of God, mercy—from everlasting to everlasting! A mercy before time, a mercy in time, a mercy beyond time! Where is the fountain-head, the spring of this mercy? In the covenant of the eternal Three. What gives rise to it? Nothing but the mere grace and free love of the divine persons. A motive cannot rise but in the purpose and breast of God himself. But on whom do the streams of this fountain flow with their quickening, comforting, sanctifying, glorifying streams? On the miserable, and none else; for none else are the objects of mercy. On such as you and me. Mercy has made a rich provision to supply all our wants, to pardon all our sins, to save us from all misery, to entitle us to all glory. And what? is mercy chiefly glorious in reserving all its blessings to another world? the greatest it does, but not all. All are now enjoyed in reversion by faith; and all things are working together in Jesus' hands to bring about the full and final enjoyment—that the mercy which is above all the works of God may have for ever and ever all the glory.

So far I wrote on Saturday night, on Mr. —— sending me word he should go on Monday.

Sunday Morning.

What a mercy does this day call to our remembrance! The Saviour, risen and ascending, sends down the divine and faithful witness for himself—"*He shall testify of me*"—bear witness to my person, to my work, that they are both divine—my person, Jehovah self-existent—my work as perfect as Jehovah could make it. He shall testify of my grace, how free it is, how full it is, and shall enable the sinner, any poor wretch, however vile in his own eyes, to trust his soul in the hands of Jesus. And having enabled the sinner to do this, then he will testify of Jesus, that he has received him, that he is safe in the arms, and may be happy

in the enjoyment of Jesus' love. Thus he will make the soul enamoured with Jesus; there will appear such consummate beauty, such infinite loveliness in his precious person, as will eclipse the glory of all other lovers. There will appear such true happiness in fellowship with him, as will quite dethrone the former idols. And when the foolish heart would depart, he will not let it. Then will he testify of Jesus, "To whom wouldst thou go? Who has eternal life to give, but him? Turn, turn again to thy rest, oh, my soul."

If the soul is mourning? He will testify of the joy that is in Jesus. If the soul be burdened? Cast the burden, says he, on thy Lord. If the soul has lost any creature-comfort? Let it go, says he: Jesus is still thy salvation, and thy great reward. If the soul be grieved with indwelling sin? It is pardoned, says he; and the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath made thee free from the law of sin and of death.

Whatever the wants of the believer are, the Spirit's office is to testify of Jesus, *there is the thing you want,* and to glorify Jesus—*there you have it freely.*

My friend, what mercy is this! The Spirit Jehovah abides with you, to testify of Jesus, and his perfect salvation; and to glorify Jesus, by enabling you to live safe and blessed upon him, making him not only all, but also all in all. And when he has taught you thus to glorify Jesus, he will keep you (oh, that is sweet!) by his almighty power, till he bring you to the heaven of heavens—the sight and enjoyment of dear Jesus, eternally dear and lovely Jesus.

Is it indeed so? Why, then commit yourself to this glorious Immanuel. Wait for the Spirit's teaching you all his ways, and showing you all are well. Remember, he has lent you your chief earthly comfort, only just so long as he pleases. When he takes it, hush, not a sigh: "Be still and know that I am God, a sovereign"—This commands resignation: but the Lamb's voice is all love. I take it away, that you may love me more, and be happier in my love. Let it be so, my dear Lord; be thou but present, all is well. The Lord bless you and yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXXVII.

Lambeth, *July* 13, 1765

My dear Friend.—I could not answer your kind letter till this day; my cause has been to be heard from day to day, before my lord chancellor, but put off, and, yesterday, was put off to the next term: so that I have, through the good will of my God, an opportunity of seeing you once more, and to talk together by the way of our ever lovely, infinitely precious Jesus, who has so won my heart, that I have no relish (like one in love) to talk of any thing but my Beloved. Tuesday morning I purpose to set out, and hope to be at —— about noon, Wednesday next, where I shall be glad to meet (at the old house) some of my dear fellow-travellers from ——. Oh, that our meeting may be to Jesus' glory. I am, in the best of bonds, of Jesus' own tying, yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXXVIII.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 20, 1765.

My dear Friend, in our common Lord—of whose mercies I am an amazing monument—what can I say to you of me and mine, but write upon all—*grace*—*grace.* I will give you an account of my life some weeks past, and you will see the goodness of my kind Jesus in all his dealings with me. When I was at Hartlepool, I heard from London that Dr. Griffith thought my wife was sick unto death, and he had no hopes of her recovery. This alarmed me; and I set out immediately, and stopped not till I got to London, where I found things as bad as

I had been made to believe: but Dr. Griffith gave her something, to which the Lord gave his blessing; and it abated the fury of her distemper, God having mercy on her, and on me also. Lady H——pressing me still to come down to——, my wife gave leave for me to go, and I went down to Derby Saturday se'nnight. We had there a most refreshing time—Fifteen pulpits were open—Showers of grace came down—Sinners in great numbers awakened, and believers comforted. Mrs. —— was taken ill, and was ordered to Bath, which broke up the family. They went away two days after I got down: but I staid to preach all the week, and especially on Sunday last at Derby, where I was much opposed by the mayor and the churchwardens, and the Arian party; but the Lord stood by me, and I was in the morning at the great church, and the afternoon at St. Werburgh's. In the evening I got into the fly alone (*in good company*); and upon coming home last night, I found my wife had relapsed, and was again in danger; but again the great physician had interposed, and we are in hopes all will be well again soon. Mercy, mercy is above all his works.

In these proceedings of Divine Providence, I admire several things; such as—

First, how odd it appears, that friends so dear and beloved as you at——should be passed by. When I went through ——, it was night: and thinks I, who would have thought I should have gone by Lady M——'s door without calling? It is the Lord's doing. As to you, I only sent my prayers for you, of which I hope you had the benefit.

Secondly, Here is a plain lesson for you—Did you not expect me? Did not you build upon my coming? You were disappointed. Why? That you might cease from man. Oh! it is good to be weaned from creature props and dependencies. Whatever does this, is a great blessing. If therefore, my not coming has made you come nearer to Christ, I would therein rejoice; yea, and therein I do rejoice. What of me? Down with me, and up with Christ. But,

Thirdly, I can assure you my heart was divided. I wanted to be at home and I wanted to stay. Duty and affection called me one way; in spirit I was and am with you, and hope ever so to be. I am, with great respect, your obliged friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXXXIX.

Nov 1, 1765.

My dear Friend.—Your letter of Sept. 9th would not have lain so long without an answer, but it was at my house at Lambeth, to which I expected daily to go from Brighthelmstone to Bath. But Lady H—— having excused my attendance at the dedication of her new chapel, I therefore sent to town for my letters, and, among the rest, found yours: for which what shall I say? What am I, the very vilest of the vile, that any of the Lord's people should look on me? But to think of his looking on me, whose eyes are a flame of fire, and yet to look with love; Oh what an humbling thought is that! I declare, the more I daily learn of myself, I grow more amazed how Jesus should love such an one. But he is all grace, or rather grace is Jesus—not something distinct from him, but he himself—his name, because it is his nature. Unto him be the praise of your kindness to one who has not a single thing to recommend him to your regard but what Jesus' free grace has most marvellously bestowed upon him. Let him have the glory; for he richly deserves it all. Whatever good I receive in this world, spiritual or temporal, I am indebted for it to his mere bounty—I crown him for it, take it off my head, and put it upon his. This is heaven below; for they are doing the same in heaven above. As we throw the crown of grace at his feet, so do they the crown of glory. Thus through him I thank you for your letter, and for all your favours.

As to what you write about my not calling on you in my journey, your disappointment was not, could not, be greater than mine. I learned from it a good lesson. It is very profitable to take notice of what providences say: they have

a tongue, and speak loudly; and the spiritual ear hears, and receives instruction. You see what man is, and what dependence is to be laid upon him. As I was going along the road, I heard a voice saying, *Cease ye from man*, from yourself, from others; put no confidence in them, in your own good, in their good, or in any good to be received from them. The command is, Put not your trust in *princes*, nor in *any* child of man, be he wise, or great, or esteemed good. Nay, look not at them, but with a single eye look unto Jesus. In him you will see every thing to put your confidence in—*Grace*, matchless grace in his heart and lips, *beauty* beyond compare, *riches* unsearchable, *honour* infinite, *righteousness* everlasting, *holiness* holy making, and that for ever. And all these he has to give, freely to give, to the unworthy. Look at him, believing, and he is yours, and all he has and is. The sight will change you into his image. As the sun shining puts his glory upon every object, so does Jesus. Oh cease then from man—look not at blind man, dark and benighted—look not at this heavy thick earth, nor at any of its glittering toys: they shine only as shined upon. Cease from them all, and look to Jesus. The good Spirit direct and fix your eyes and mine upon him, till we see heaven in his face.

The same voice still pursuing me I perceived that I was not only to cease from *looking* to man and all human things, but also to cease from depending on them. I was not to *live* upon them. I could, as it were, hear a voice, *Live not upon us, but live upon the Prince of Life.* He is a never-failing fountain of life. He speaks, and the dead live. His voice makes and keeps alive. We live *by* him, and live *on* him, and *in* him. All other persons and things but him concern only the perishing, dying life of the body; but the life which he gives is his own spiritual, divine, eternal life. I cannot wish you a greater blessing than to hear with power, and to find what I did in my journey—*Cease ye from living upon man, and live upon me.* So we do, Lord Christ; the life which we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God.

From hence I was led to see the necessity of ceasing to hope for happiness from all these things about us. They have it not to give. It grows not out of that earth which layeth in wickedness, nor can it be increased by any good under the sun; because it is one of the perfect gifts which cometh down from the Father of Lights. And when it is given by his grace, and received by faith, then this true philosophers' stone turns all things into gold. Faith living upon Jesus can turn those things into happiness, which, in their own nature, could produce nothing but misery. Wonderful transmutation! it changes darkness into light, death into life, weakness into strength, sin into righteousness, mourning into joy, hell into heaven. By this faith we have Christ in us, the hope of glory, Christ dwelling in the heart; and where he is, there all he has is. All things are ours, salvation from all evil, a title to the love of God, and to the glory of God, and a fitness also and meetness for the eternal enjoyment of God in his love and glory. Cease ye from man, then, and all is yours. Oh may you and I learn to cease from all schemes of happiness in any object but in Jesus. The more we live to him, the more dead he will make us to every thing else. He will let you love your relations, nay, he commands you to love them; but then you must take them from him as his bounty, and use them as his gifts, dependent on his sovereign will, free to give, free to take away, when and what he pleases. When your will can be made thus really resigned to his will, then he will make you happy, and you will feel something of their blessed oneness with him, who have no will but his, and therefore follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. I mark what you say upon that point. A resigned will is, not where there is no rising of the flesh against God's will, but where there is victory over the will of the flesh. Pray take notice of this; and try whether you have not this evidence of your adoption, that you desire the Father's will, and not yours, may be done.

I am labouring at Brighthelmstone among a sweet people, with whom I am exceedingly happy. The work of dear Jesus prospers among us. His person grows more beloved, his work more precious, fellowship with him more close and intimate, and therefore more happy. Our hearts, warmed with his love, are warm with brotherly love; stirring up one another to press forward for the prize of our high calling, that is, to win Christ, and be found in him at the hour of death,

and at the day of judgment. May the same Lord Christ grow dearer to you and yours every day.

I am always bound to pray for your welfare, being by many ties yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXL.

All spiritual blessings be on my dear friend! whatever the tender heart, or the almighty arm of the loving Jesus has to bestow, may it be all yours! You made me promise to inform you of my motions, which I now fulfill.

God willing, I shall be next Sunday at Mr. C.'s; on Monday morning in Y——; from thence I shall make the best of my way to T——, and if I hear nothing of you there, I shall proceed to A——. My time is short, so that I can but just stay to take my leave of my friends. What a life is this! hurry, hurry, hurry, from place to place, from this object to that;—weary with seeking, but never finding rest.—Happy Christian who is fixed to a point!—Go where he will one object is his all. The crucified Saviour is his happiness; his perfect, everlasting happiness; and this heaven he carries about with him. No time, no place, no circumstances, make any change. He has one *Lord*, one faith, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Come pain, sickness, poverty, death, the Saviour's love and power bear him up. Come temptations of all kinds, I will be with thee in the hour of temptation, says the Lord God. Where he is, nothing need be feared, because nothing can hurt. Oh, my friend, the true knowledge of Jesus Christ is an infallible cure for all the miseries which come into the world by sin. There is no evil of mind or body, temporal or eternal, but our precious dear Lord is by office engaged to remove it. And shall not you and I value and love him? What can we set our hearts upon; what can bid so high for them as this adorable Saviour? May he enable us to give them to him, and then he will sanctify all their inferior loves; will let us love them as flowing from his grace; so that this love will make us love him more. This love is heaven. All joy and glory is in it. And as for the happiness of his redeemed people, we shall never know how great it is till we join the church above. It will be a glorious meeting. Jesus bless you! *Amen. Amen.* I am, for his sake, your faithful friend,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXLI.

Nov. 25, 1765.

My dear Friend.—I have much to tell you of that ever dear and precious Lover—your best friend and mine. I had a token of his goodness in your last, for which I thank Lady M——t, but, above all, her Lord and mine. I have a tale to relate of his free and kind heart, which will last longer than this world. It is really heaven to be relating it, and I cannot hold my tongue. He makes himself so lovely by continual favours, that my heart is quite won, and by his sweet constraint is *now* fixed upon him. I would turn to other *lovers*, but sweet Jesus will not let me. Oh, the boundless grace of his most amiable breast! Finite nature cannot tell (how should it?) his infinite love. But as we get emptied of *self*, we know and experience more of his love. This I wish you, and my very dear Miss ——; growth in grace, that is, self-abasement, and growth in the knowledge of God our Saviour. May he empty you of self, and fill you with more of his good things. We have very much of his presence and glory in our assemblies this winter, more than ever. His work revives amongst us: and, cold and frosty as the weather is, our hearts burn within us. Last night St. Dunstan's was a very Bethel; it was like the dedication of the Temple,

when the glory of Jehovah came down and filled the house. I was preaching on these words—"My meditation of him shall be sweet" And so it was, indeed. When I was setting forth his undertakings, his suitableness to fulfil them as God-man, his actual fulfilling of them, his power to apply and to make them effectual; how he does this by his word preached, in the hand of the Spirit made the means of working faith in the heart, and of producing the fruits of faith in fellowship with Jesus and his fulness, by which Jesus grows sweeter and sweeter, and so brings us to the end of our meditation, the sweetest of all even of divine sweets, the enjoyment of Jesus in his kingdom of glory; oh, what a seal did he set to this preached gospel! He made it the power of God. The meditation of his goodness yesterday has still a relish and delightful savour! To-day it is sweet, very, very sweet indeed. Pray mind I do not make this my salvation. No, but these sweet streams lead me to the fountain. I do not rest in them; but, if these be so sweet, what must the fountain be? If little faith finds Jesus so precious, what must precious Jesus be, when faith yields to sight and sense? My dear, dear friend, prize this pearl, it is inestimable. Two things I would beg your notice of; I know you have received him. The

First is, press for more knowledge—read, pray, hear, to be made more teachable and humble, that Jesus may have the glory of such discoveries as he makes of his person and of his work. And do not stop; press on, as long as you live, sit very low, very low at Christ's feet, to hear his words. The

Second is, make use of his fulness; you are welcome; you cannot use it too much. Hence comes sweet fellowship, and by it all things will do you good. Carry them to that best friend, pour them out into his loving bosom. He delights in familiarity. You have been ill; that is the best for you: live by faith, and Jesus will make it plain to you. Yours, in that incomparable Lover,

W. ROMAINE

LETTER CCXLII.

LAMBETH, *Jan.* 16, 1766.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I have several reasons for writing to you at this time. The first is, that ever so long ago I wrote you a huge scribble; to which, having received no answer, I thought it was high time I should get a little out of your debt, and pay off some of my old score with these scraps of paper. I hope you will take them, according to the American phrase, for *paper currency*. Put every letter to account, and, having rated them just what you please, make me creditor for it.

My second reason for writing is to inquire after you. How can I help being concerned for those whom I love, especially in the Lord? Such friends I have at ——. It would be a real pleasure to me, and a profit to yourself, if I knew what to ask for you, when I go to Court. How is your bodily health? I know you are generally weak and low, and I know it is good for you, yea, the best of all for you. The Physician who never mistook a case prescribes to your tender constitution. His prescription is perfect love. He could not bring about his gracious designs any other way; he wants to wean you from a life of sense, therefore in infinite mercy he takes away sensible enjoyments. He would have you to go on from faith to faith: but how could faith grow so fast, as by keeping you from those things which are its very bane and destruction? He is bringing you to more fellowship with him than you have had, therefore you must have less fellowship with the world. Fewer outward comforts will certainly make you experience more spiritual comforts. This is our Physician's fixed parctice—he never varies from it, not in one instance: mind one of his favourite patients, *thy rod and thy staff comfort me:* the afflicting rod could not comfort, pain could not be pleasure, no chastening can be in itself joyous; but the staff, the being supported under the rod, and the feeling of that support, he found faith and patience bear him up under the rod, which brought him to such close communion with his gracious Saviour, that he was comforted under the cross. This is

also the experience of one highly favoured, as you may read, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. Let me know, then, how your soul prospereth under Jesus' care.

I have also a third reason for writing, which is to wish you a happy new year, the happiest of all you ever saw, and therefore I wish you more, still more enjoyment of our infinitely rich, everlastingly precious Jesus. You will live to a blessed purpose, if every day of this new year you get more out of self, and live more *in* and *on* Jesus. We have had a most remarkable time this Christmas of his grace and love. I have scarce an acquaintance who has not been favoured with blessed visits from him. Oh how great is his goodness! how great is his beauty! Incomparable both! May your dear heart, my friend, feel what I did at the Lock on Innocents' day, when I was preaching on these words of Psal. lxxxvii. "All my springs are in thee." I gave them first a translation of the psalm, then a paraphrase, then application; the substance of the two first I send you: the psalm literally rendered runs thus: Title is,

"For the sons of miserable man a psalm to be sung."

Ver. 1. He is to be established in the mountains of his holy one. Mind, how sweetly the Holy Spirit begins; he mentions not who this He that was to be established is, for all who are under his teaching know.

2. Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

3. Weighty things are spoken of thee, thou city of Alehim. Selah, attend to this. What this love in v. 2 was for, what these weighty things in v. 3 were, the next words show, where God the Father is introduced speaking:

4. I will cause it to be remembered by them who knew me in Rahab and Babylon, behold Philistia and Tyre, the people of Ethiopia—*here was the name born*—born in Zion, to be the Saviour of Rahab and Babylon, Philistia and Tyre, and Ethiopia, even as many as the Lord our God shall call in these countries.

David speaking by the Holy Ghost, adds in verse

5. And of Zion it shall be said, a person and a person (God and man) shall be born in her, and he himself the Most High shall perfectly establish her. (Namely, the church founded upon the incarnate God, against which, he says himself, the gates of hell shall not prevail.)

6. Jehovah shall record it, when he is describing the people, *that here was the name born;* that divine name in which alone there is salvation, and from which all true joy both in heaven and earth ariseth, as the saints sung in the Old Testament, as the angels sung at his birth, and as the redeemed of the Lord will sing for ever.

7. And the singers, as well as the players on instruments, shall say, *all my springs are in thee* (all, all the springs of grace, of glory, all arise from Jehovah manifest in the flesh.) Oh that such a spring as we had at the opening of these words may flow into and refresh your heart quite through the wilderness till you come to the fountain-head; may you still drink of the water which flows through the rock Christ, till you drink of that which flows from the throne of the Lamb. And so it will be: the Rock will follow you, and you will have the comfort of it, if you keep in mind that little word *in*, all my springs are in thee, not only from thee, through thee (which is true), but in thee. If faith fix here, all will be well. For if at any time the stream fail, then you may go up to the fountain-head, making up your happiness in Jesus, get you whatever it be, little or much, in present comfort out of his fulness. Yet still he, and all he is and has, is yours.

My paper grows short, and my fingers are so cold I can scarce write; yet I have a fourth reason for writing—upon Mr. Alexander Cole's death. I wrote to Newcastle for his papers, especially for a book in manuscript, after the manner of the Pilgrim's Progress; my brother sent me word, his daughter at —— had been over, and carried away all her father's papers. I wish you could get this book and read it, and send me your opinion of it. —— perhaps could help you, to whom give my kind love.

One thing more, and I have done. Yesterday I dined with Mr. Berridge. He was making great complaint of his debts, contracted by his keeping, out of his own living, two preachers and their horses, and several local preachers, and for the rents of several barns, in which they preach. He sees it was wrong to run

in debt, and will be more careful. But it is done. My application is to Lady Margaret. Will you stand my friend with her, and tell her Berridge's case? If she pleases to assist him, I should be glad to convey her charity to him. You will be the judge whether this be proper or not to mention to her. I beg my kind love to her. Nothing is yet done at Blackfriars: but Jesus does all things well, he times all things for the best; I am sure of it; therefore I wait my Lord's time, and blessed waiting it is.—May he bless you and yours in body and soul, and that for ever and ever: so prays,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXLIII.

LAMBETH, *Feb.* 4, 1766.

ALL the blessings of Jesus' love be with dear ——. I was not in a hurry to answer your letter, because Mr. Berridge promised to make his acknowledgments to ——: and because the time was at hand when my lord chancellor declared he would end the affair of Blackfriars. You have heard of the event. My friends are rejoicing all around me, and wishing me that joy which I cannot take. It is my Master's will, and I submit. He knows what is best, both for his own glory, and his people's good. And I am certain he makes no mistake in either of these points. But my head hangs down upon the occasion, through the awful apprehensions which I ever had of the cure of souls. I am frightened to think of watching over two or three thousand, when it is work enough to watch over one. The plague of my own heart almost wearies me to death; what can I do with such a vast number? Besides, I had promised myself a little rest and retirement in the evening of life, and had already sat down with a "soul, take thine ease." And lo! my fine plan is broken all to pieces. I am called into a public station, and to the sharpest engagement, just as I had got into winter quarters—an engagement, too, for life. I can see nothing before me, so long as the breath is in my body, but war—and that with unreasonable men—a divided parish, an angry clergy, a wicked Sodom, and a wicked world; all to be resisted and overcome: besides all these, a sworn enemy, subtle and cruel, with whom I can make no peace, no, not a moment's truce, night and day, with all his children and his host, is aiming at my destruction. When I take counsel of the flesh, I begin to faint. But when I go to the sanctuary, I see my cause good, and my Master is almighty—a tried friend; and then he makes my courage revive. Although I am no way fit for the work, yet he called me to it, and on him I depend for strength to do it, and for success to crown it. I utterly despair of doing any thing as of myself, and therefore the more I have to do, I shall be forced to live more by faith upon him. In this view I hope to get a great income by my living. I shall want my Jesus more, and shall get closer to him. As he has made my application to him more necessary and more constant, he has given me stronger tokens of his love. Methinks I can hear his sweet voice,—"Come closer, come closer, soul; nearer yet; I will bring you into circumstances that you cannot do one moment without me." Oh that you could always hear that voice, it would be your heaven! and indeed it is his language—nothing but love is on his tongue; but the noise of the flesh sometimes drowns his small still voice.—Comfort would flow into your heart, like a river, if the ears of faith were but open to attend to the endearments of Jesus. "Soul, thou shalt not live at a distance from me; I bought thee with a great price; thou art mine. When I afflict, it is to bring thee nearer to myself; to make thee glad in me; to bring thy heart to me. Thou shalt not make up thy comforts in the streams; come, come up nearer, nearer still, to the fountain-head. To make thee, to force thee to live happy in my fulness, I will dry up the streams, and so will I teach thee to make me all in all." The infinitely lovely Lamb of God teach you this lesson! All his word preaches it, all his providences proclaim it. Every cross says—Go

to Jesus, live near his bleeding heart, or else I shall break the back of your patience. Every difficulty says, Go to Jesus, and he will make you strong in the power of his might to overcome. The world, and all the things in it, say, and the believer has ears to hear, Go to Jesus, there is no good in us—it is all in him. Whatever comes, I go to Jesus with it, and all is well—his smiles are humbling, his rod is sanctifying; in all his dealings he is good, and doeth good.

I know these things as well in theory, as I see the words upon the paper. But to practise them is indeed hard, except in his strength, to whom all things are possible; in it and by it all the things we meet with will not only bring us to live more *upon* Christ, but will also bring us to live more *to* Christ. By doing the one we do the other. He that makes him all, shows forth most of his praise. What can glorify Christ like that believer who attempts nothing without consulting him, undertakes no work or duty but in his strength, rejoices in nothing but in Jesus, and in his salvation? Oh that you may learn, my dear friend, thus to exalt King Jesus! I would have you to be ever bringing some honour to him, by making him your *all* in deed and in truth. Praise his fulness by living always upon it, and then he will make you always happy. Let him be all your salvation, and all your desire—all your salvation, as to the merit of it; all your desire, as to the efficacy of it; all your salvation in purchase; all your desire in enjoyment. So he is in heaven: Oh that we could make him so upon earth!

I have one favour to beg of you. Do not refuse me. You see my station: you hear my difficulties. Will you remember me *to him*, who calleth the things that be not as though they were. He can send to war at his cost, and for his glory. If you love me, make mention of me when you go to Court. Pray for usefulness and for humility. I cease not to mention you.

I have received Lady B——'s money, and have been much in gaols of late. I am confined to church people; and when I see a prisoner, a dissenter, and cannot relieve him, with a wife and several children, it makes my very heart ache. So I thought your gift was from heaven. I have made one family happy, and shall make others, and by and by will send you the particulars.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXLIV.

July 22, 1766.

My very dear Friend.—I am wishing for your prosperity in body and soul; but above all, that your soul may prosper: and it is in the most thriving state when you are lowest and vilest in your own eyes, and Jesus alone is eyed and esteemed. This is growth. And self is kept down, so Jesus is exalted. Oh, what views have I of this manner of growing in grace! Let me talk to you freely of it at our next meeting, as I have learned it not from books, but from God's word, and God's teaching.

I am learning, though dull, how to eye him in all things: as it is my privilege, so I find it my happiness; but, alas! alas! I am a miserable learner. However, I set out afresh, and resolve not to give over aiming at my lesson. Do ever so well, I would do better, for I see in him worlds of beauty and glory, which will take up a long eternity to study, and, what is best of all, to *enjoy*. To my dear, dearest Jesus, I commend you and all yours. I am, very sincerely, yours in our common Lord,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXLV.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 30, 1766.

My dear Friend.—I have been carrying here and there the sweet savour of Jesus' dear name ever since I left you. I was in Sussex for a month, and have heard, since my return, a better account of your health, for which I am thankful. The Lord having appointed you for his heavenly kingdom, has also appointed

all the steps which are to lead you thither. Every pain is in the covenant. Your confinement, your miscarriages, your faintings, your disappointments, not one thing that thwarts your will, but it is in God's will. Nothing can befal you but what is ordered, contrived for you by wisdom, brought upon you by love. Oh for eyes to see, for a heart to receive, all God's dealings with you, in this covenant view! How sweet would be your many trials, if you found them *all* appointed and managed for you by the best of friends. Learn to receive them thus.

I am going to Bath, and hope for a little leisure there to write to you a long letter. My subject is ready. After you receive it, I shall be glad to hear how your sentiments and mine agree. Pray remember me with many thanks to ——. I am in debt more than I can acknowledge. My best respects to her. Pray for a poor worm,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXLVI

LAMBETH, *Nov.* 15, 1766.

I AM indebted much to my dear friend, but, among other things, I owe you a note of hand, which I am now ready to pay. I wanted to talk with you at —— upon the temper and disposition of a true believer; but, being prevented there, I promised to send you my thoughts upon this subject, which I am the more ready to do to-day, because the reason of my making the promise not only still subsists, but is also increasing. A temper directly contrary to the Christian is spreading among professors. I see the delusion grow, and I am a witness to the baneful effects of it. How many have you and I heard of, who want to be something in themselves, and, rather than not be so, will be beholden to Christ to set them up with a stock of grace? They would gladly receive a talent from him, that, by being faithful to grace given, and trading well with it, they may look with delight on their improvements, and thereby hope to get more grace and more glory. This is the Popish plan, the Arminian, the Baxterian, the Wesleyan: very flattering to nature, exceedingly pleasing to self-righteousness, very exalting, yea, it is crowning *free will*, and debasing King Jesus. I would be more jealous than I am over you in this matter, if I had not seen how the Lord teaches you, and warns you of this rock Your frequent indispositions are his sweet lessons, by which he would bring you to the true gospel frame of spirit, which is this:—It is the proper work of the grace of Jesus, to humble the proud sinner, to make him and to keep him sensible of his wants, convinced always that he has not any good of his own, and cannot possibly of himself obtain any, either in earth or heaven, but what he must be receiving every moment out of the fulness of Jesus.

The devil fell by pride, and he drew man into the same crime. He promised him independence, and he still persuades deceived man to set up for himself. That is the scheme of all unawakened men: they are resolved to be happy in spite of God. The Spirit of Jesus is sent to humble this proud sinner, which he does by giving him a view of God's holy nature and God's holy law. This makes sin, and consequently the sinner, hateful; discovers his guilt and his danger: if he attempts to do any thing to make God love him, the Holy Spirit humbles him for that very thing, by showing him the sinfulness of his motive, and the imperfection of the action. Whatever he seeks to rest in, the Spirit of Jesus detects the false foundation, till he leaves him no resource but to believe in the only begotten Son of God; so that when he comes to Jesus, he is stripped of all, quite naked and blind, moneyless and friendless, empty of good as the devil and sin could make him. This is all the fitness and preparation for Christ which I know of. And when Christ is thus received, the same Spirit which would let him, the sinner, bring nothing to Christ, will now make him bring all from Christ, and so keep him sensible of his wants. He will teach the believer more, daily, of his poverty, weakness, unworthiness, vileness, ignorance, &c. that he may be kept humble, without any good but what he is forced to fetch out of the

fulness of Jesus. And when he would go any where else for comfort, to duties, frames, gifts, and graces (for pride will live, and thrive too, upon any thing but Jesus,) his Spirit makes them dry and lean, and will not let him stop short of the fountain-head of all true comfort: in short, he will glorify nothing but Jesus. He will stain the pride of all greatness, and of all goodness, excepting what is derived from the fulness of the incarnate God.

I know one who learned this very slowly, but has had much pains taken with him; and to make what I have been saying more plain, I would illustrate it by his experience. He was a very, very vain, proud young man: knew almost every thing but himself, and therefore was mighty fond of himself. He met with many disappointments to his pride, which only made him prouder, till the Lord was pleased to let him see and feel the plague of his own heart. At this time my acquaintance with him began. He tried every method that can be tried to get peace, but found none. In his despair of all things else, he betook himself to Jesus, and was most kindly received. He trusted the word of promise, and experienced the sweetness in the promise. After this, he went through various frames and trials of faith, too many to mention, and he is now got, where may Mrs. ——, your dear sister, get, and as far beyond it as you can.

First, he has been brought to a clear conviction, that *all fulness of good is in Jesus*, as clear, as that all the sap in the branch is from the stock on which it grows, as that all the nourishment in the member is from the body. What has the branch or the member, except what they receive? Now this continual receiving from Jesus every thing, saying, "You must go to him, you must go to him," is a most humbling lesson. And my friend says, it is nothing but this which crucifies his pride; he has been attempting for many years to *be* something, to *do* something of himself, but could not succeed: disappointed again and again, yet he would not give it up, till God made him feel, in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelled *no good thing:* and now he writes folly, weakness, sin, on all that is his own; not only clearly convinced that all fulness of good is in Jesus, hut is also, in the second place, *content* it should be in him. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. It pleases the Holy Spirit to testify of his fulness, and to glorify nothing but it: and by his teaching, it pleases the believer. He is made quite satisfied that all fulness should dwell in that dear God-man: content to have nothing but what he must go to him for; yea, happy to go to Jesus for those very things of which he himself is empty, and which he cannot have any where else. My friend's heart glows, and his very countenance brightens up, and one catches fire at his words, when he is talking upon this subject. "Oh," says he, "that you did but know what I experience in living upon the fulness of Jesus! God's will and mine are one in this matter: this subjection to his will is *heaven regained;* so I find it. I rest perfectly on the fulness, and I enjoy most sweetly, what God has laid up in it for my use. My conscience has a peace, that passeth all understanding, through faith in the blood of the Lamb. I see myself in him perfectly accepted, perfectly justified, perfectly comely in his comeliness, perfectly happy in his love: all the desires of the soul satisfied with Jesus' person and Jesus' work. This, this is the death of pride. Here free-will, self-righteousness, a legal spirit cannot work. The Spirit and power of Jesus in this his glory makes them hide their heads."

This is living like a Christian. It is a life, in one respect, only below an angel's; and yet, great and blessed as it is, I have heard my friend talk in a very uncommon strain upon a state even beyond this, which he calls *heaven enjoyed*, and that is,

Thirdly, he is *thankful* that all fulness dwells in Jesus—not only is convinced of it, and content with it, but also blesses God for its being in Jesus. This is all they do in the highest heaven, and he has most of heaven who does this most like them. My friend describes his meaning thus: "I live out of myself—I nothing have, I nothing am, but folly and sin—Jesus is my life; in him is the fulness of its being, and of its comforts: whatever I want, I find it in him. I experience day by day the kindness of his heart, and the bounty of his hand. Blessings on him, my heart enjoys what no tongue can describe. Whatever I go to him for, he always sends me away with matter of thankfulness. Constant

fellowship with him endears to me his person more and more. Communion with him in his offices makes him infinitely lovely. Partaking of his overflowing love, makes it everlastingly precious. And living upon the fulness of these, is the fulness of joy. Glory, glory be to God-Jesus for ever and ever: Heaven and earth say with my heart, *Amen.*"

Thus does my friend illustrate the definition which I give you of the true gospel-frame of spirit. I hope we shall live to talk of it, and live to enjoy it more. Nothing else is worth living for. All means of grace are only useful as they help us to live thus. All providences, sicknesses, losses, successes, are only so far blessings, as they lead us more out of ourselves into the fulness of Jesus. My dear Mrs. ——, I can write to-day upon nothing else. I hope I write seasonably. When you open this letter, you will want this lesson. I am sure you will, and God bless it to you; I follow it with my prayers, and I can do no more; but our common Lord will hear, I know he will; and will accompany my poor words with his presence. To the care of his dear loving heart I commend you you and yours. Wonder not I have not written before; I have been in a more preaching way this summer than I ever was in my life, and travelled much more, and have had with me a sweet savour of Jesus' dear name. Oh he is precious to my soul: how much, even now, I shall want time in eternity to tell: so precious, that I think I have not long to be here, or else the matchless lover will make this earth a very heaven. But I say, I, the vilest worm that ever crawled or escaped hell, not to set me up, but *him*, the high exalted worthy Saviour. Again to him I commend you. Yours truly in him,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCXLVII.

LAMBETH, *Jan.* 24, 1767.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.—I have waited till I am quite wearied out. Many a look and prayer have I sent ——ward, but all in vain. No tidings could I get till Mr. —— told me of your state. And on his information I am encouraged to inquire after you and yours, and after a very, very long letter, which I wrote upon my coming home from Bath. Pray give me some account, for indeed I long to know about these matters. The letter was upon a subject that I scarce ever mentioned before to any body; it was *my own* experience; and I would not have it lost for a great deal. I have been trying it by scripture, and I could give you infallible proofs of its being agreeable to the word of God; and perhaps may, when I hear from you next. It will be some satisfaction to me (as I never take copies of any thing) to read my own history at ——. Before that time I may have got a little lower, and have drank deeper into the knowledge of Jesus. That seems to be the end of living, to have self abased, and Jesus exalted; and these two are inseparable. As self sinks in esteem, Jesus rises. When self is nothing but sin, then Jesus is a glorified Saviour. When self is nothing but misery, then Jesus is all heaven. I have been led to take particular notice of this lately from these views:

First, the person of Jesus; he was Jehovah. All the glory of the Godhead was in the man Jesus. And what was his appearance! mean, to the last degree. A worm, and no man, the very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people. What was his form? a servant, a poor servant. What were his tempers? meek and lowly, yea, meekness and lowliness itself; a perfect original, of whom all his disciples may learn to be meek and lowly. His way to glory was humility; so is ours. His glory, indeed, was his humility; so is ours. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," was true of the head as well as of the members. Oh that you and I may be in this conformed to him! because herein,

Secondly, our fellowship with him consists. Whatever a man sees in himself great or good, is an absolute hindrance to the enjoyment of Jesus. Whatever he sees vile and wicked; therein (if he has faith) he will enjoy the Saviour. The more he sees, the more enjoyment: for that which humbles the sinner brings him

nearer to the Saviour. The humblest sinner is capable of the closest communion, and is thereby fitted for the largest communications of Jesus' love. The emptiest hold the most, and the emptiest receive the most. Oh for daily emptying! This self, this full self, what reasonings, what legality, what self-righteousness has it, and all to keep us from being filled with the fulness of Christ; this is your grand enemy, that idol *self*. The Lord crucify it by his own almighty grace! and to induce you to apply to him for this power, I would recommend it to you.

Thirdly, in reading the Bible, take notice of the persons to whom the promises are made. Their character is always one and the same: the poor in spirit; the contrite and broken in heart; the hungry; the thirsty; the meek and lowly. Take this general promise as an instance, *God giveth grace to the humble*, and with grace he gives all things. See how I get writing on without intending it; I only sat down to inquire about you, and all our dear friends; Miss —— at the head of them. Lo! here is a long scroll started up. In love remember me to all friends, and, if you please, with my hearty prayers for their welfare at ——. Mine eyes have tears for them. Dear Jesus reveal himself so to you in his glory, as to eclipse all created good, and *yourself* especially. So prays a poor sinner.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXLVIII.

March 21, 1767.

My dear Friend.—I would not have let your long and kind epistle be so carelessly passed by, but that I am at present left to myself without a curate. All my time is taken up with parish duty; a great deal of it very unprofitably spent. But I am called to it, and I must, and do, submit. I have sat down, and I will write on till I am interrupted. And I begin with telling you how your last refreshed me. It was a seasonable feast; for I was in a sad taking about the account which I had sent you of myself, having never found any freedom to do it to any body living before; and I feared either it should be lost, or fall into any other person's hand. I am glad it is in yours. Now you know whereabouts I am, and what my present state is, it may be of some use to you to be informed how I was brought unto it. God's dealings with me have been wonderful, not only for the royal sovereignty of his richest grace, but also for the manner of his teaching, on which I cannot look back without adoring my meek and lowly prophet. He would have all the honour (and he well deserves it) of working out and also of applying his glorious salvation. When I was in trouble and soul-concern, he would not let me learn of man. I went every where to hear, but nobody was suffered to speak to my case. The reason of this I could not tell then, but I know it now. The Arminian methodists flocked about me, and courted my acquaintance, which became a great snare unto me. By their means I was brought into a difficulty, which distressed me several years. "I was made to believe that part of my title to salvation was to be inherent—something called holiness in myself, which the grace of God was to help me to. And I was to get it by watchfulness, prayer, fasting, hearing, reading, sacraments, &c.: so that after much and long attendance in those means, I might be able to look inward, and be pleased with my own improvement, finding I was grown in grace, a great deal holier, and more deserving of heaven than I had been." I do not wonder now that I received this doctrine. It was sweet food to a proud heart. I feasted on it, and to work I went. It was hard labour and sad bondage, but the hopes of having something to glory in of my own kept up my spirits. I went on, day after day, striving, agonizing (as they called it); but still I found myself not a bit better. I thought this was the fault, or that, which being amended, I should certainly succeed; and therefore set out afresh, but still came to the same place. No galley slave worked harder, or to less purpose. Sometimes I was quite discouraged, and ready to give all up; but the discovery of some supposed hindrance set me to work again. Then I would redouble my diligence and exert all my strength. Still I got no ground This made me often wonder; and still

more, when I found, at last, that I was going backward. Methought I grew worse. I saw more sin in myself, instead of more holiness, which made my bondage very hard, and my heart very heavy. The thing I wanted, the more I pursued it, flew farther and farther from me. I had no notion that this was divine teaching, and that God was delivering me from my mistake in this way: so that the discoveries of my growing worse were dreadful arguments against myself, until now and then a little light would break in and show me something of the glory of Jesus; but it was a glimpse only—gone in a moment. As I saw more of my heart, and began to feel more of my corrupt nature, I got clearer views of gospel-grace; and in proportion as I came to know myself, I advanced in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. But this was very slow work: the old leaven of self-righteousness, new christened *holiness*, stuck close to me still, and made me a very dull scholar in the school of Christ. But I kept on, making a little progress; and as I was forced to give up one thing, and another, on which I had some dependence, I was left, at last, stripped of all, and neither had, nor could see where I could have, aught to rest my hopes, that I could call my own. This made way for blessed views of Jesus. Being now led to very deep discoveries of my own legal heart, of the dishonour which I had put upon the Saviour, of the despite I had done to the Spirit of his grace, by resisting and perverting the workings of his love; these things humbled me. I became very vile in mine own eyes, I gave over striving: the pride of free-will, the boast of mine own works, were laid low. And as self was debased, the scriptures became an open book, and every page presented the Saviour in new glory. Then were explained to me these truths, which are now the very joy and life of my soul. Such as,

First, the plan of salvation, contrived by the wisdom of Jehovah Alehim, fulfilled in the divine person and work of Jesus, and applied by the Spirit of Jesus. The whole was so ordered, from first to last, that all the glory of it might be secured to the persons in Jehovah. The devil fell by pride; he tempted and seduced man into pride: therefore the Lord, to hide pride from man, has so contrived his salvation that he who glorieth should have nothing to glory in but the Lord.

Secondly, The benefits of salvation are all the free gifts of free grace, conferred without any regard to what the receiver of them is; nothing being looked at by the Giver but his own sovereign glory. Therefore the receivers are the ungodly, the worst of them, the unworthy, the chief of sinners; such are saved freely by *grace* through faith, and that not of themselves: it (namely, salvation by faith) is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

Thirdly, When I considered these benefits one by one, it was the very death of self-righteousness and self-complacency; for when I looked at the empty hand which faith puts forth to receive them; whence was the hand emptied—whence came faith—whence the power to put forth the empty hand—and whence the benefits received upon putting it forth? All is of God; he humbles us, that we may be willing to receive Christ; he keeps us humble, that we may be willing to live by faith upon Christ received: and as it is a great benefit to have this faith, so it is,

Fourthly, A great, inestimably great benefit to live by faith; for this is a life in every act of it dependent upon another. Self is renounced, so far as Christ is lived upon. And faith is the most emptying, pulling down grace; most emptying, because it says, and proves it too. *In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing*, and therefore it will not let a man see aught good in himself, but pulls down every high thought, and lays it low in subjection to Jesus. It is called the *faith of the Son of God*, because he is the author and the finisher of it; he gives it; he gives to live by it; he gives the benefits received by it; he gives the glory laid up for it; so that if I live to God, and in any act have living communion with God, it is by nothing in myself, but wholly by the faith of the Son of God. When I wanted to do any thing commanded, (what they call duties), I found,

Fifthly, A continual matter of humiliation. I was forced to be dependent for the will and for the power, and, having done my best, I could not present it to God but upon the golden altar that sanctifieth the gifts; not the worthiness, not the goodness of the gifts, but the sanctifying grace of the great High Priest alone

can make them holy and acceptable. How low did this lay the pride of good works; since, after all, they were viler than dung, unless perfumed with the sweet incense of Jesus' blood and righteousness! Here I learnt to eye him in all my works and duties, the Alpha and Omega of them; the life and spirit of all my prayers, and sermons, and hearing, and reading, and ordinances; they are all dead works, unless done in and by faith of the Son of God. Against this blessed truth, of which I am as certain as that I am alive, I find my nature kick. To this hour, a legal heart will be creeping into duties, to get between me and my dear Jesus, whom I go to meet in them. But he soon recovers me from the temptation, makes me loathe myself for it, and gets fresh glory to his sovereign grace; and as all the great and good things ever done in the world were done by faith, so all the crosses ever endured with patience were from the same cause which is,

Sixthly, Another humbling lesson. I find to this moment so much unbelief and impatience in myself, that if God was to leave me to be tried with any thing that crossed my will, if it was but a feather, it would break my back. Nothing tends to keep me vile in my own eyes, like this fretting, and murmuring, and heart-burning, when the will of God in the least thwarts my will. I read, *the trial of your faith worketh patience;* the trial of mine, the direct contrary. Instead of patient submission, I want to have mine own way, to take very little physic, and that very sweet: so the flesh lusteth. But the physician knows better. He knows when and what to prescribe; may every potion purge out this impatient, proud, unbelieving temper, so that faith may render healthful to the soul what is painful to the flesh. And as no cross can be endured without the faith of the Son of God, so,

Seventhly, and lastly, There is no comfortable view of leaving the world, but by the same faith. *These all,* who had obtained a good report in every age, *died in faith.* On their death-bed they did not look for present peace and future glory, but to the Lamb of God. Their great works, their eminent services, their various sufferings, all were cast behind their backs, and they died as they lived, looking at nothing but Jesus. He was their antidote against the fear and against the power of death. They feared not the cold death-sweat; Jesus' bloody sweat was their dependence. The dart lost its force on Jesus' side. The sting was lost in his corpse. Death stung itself to death, when it killed him. There is life in its highest exaltation and glory, in not breathing the air of this world. This life, through death, Jesus entered on, and we enter on it now by faith; and when our breath is stopped, we have this life, as he has it, pure, spiritual, and divine. Because he lives it, we shall live it also. Yes, my dear friend, we, and you, and I, after we have lived a little longer, to empty us more, to bring us more out of ourselves, that we may be humbled, and Jesus exalted more, we shall fall asleep in Jesus, not die, but sleep; not see, not taste death, so he promises us; but in his dear arms sweetly go to rest in our weary bodies, when our souls shall be with the Lord. And then we shall be perfect in that lesson, which we learn so very slow in this present world, namely, that from him, and of him, and to him, are all things: to whom be all the glory, for ever and ever, *Amen.*

These are the things which God himself has taught me. Man had no hand at all in it. No person in the world, not I myself; for I fought against them as long as I could: so that my present possession of them, with all the rich blessings which they contain, is from my heavenly teacher alone. And I have not learned them, as we do mathematics, to keep them in memory, and to make use of them when I please: no, I find in me, to this moment, an opposition to every gospel truth, both to the belief of it in my head, and to the comfort of it in my heart. I am still a poor dependent creature, sitting very low at the feet of my dear Teacher, and learning to admire that love of his, which brought me down and keeps me down at his feet. There be my seat, till I learn my lesson perfectly. That will soon be. There is nothing in his presence but what is like himself. In heaven all is perfection. The saints are as humble as they are happy Clothed with glory and clothed with humility, with one heart and one voice they cry, "Worthy is the Lamb." They look not at, they praise not one another; but the Lamb is glorified in his saints, and will have from them never-ending praise

and glory for the glory which his sovereign grace has bestowed upon them. In a measure I now feel what they do. My heart is in tune, and I can join that blessed hymn; looking at him as the giver of grace (and grace is glory begun, *nota bene*) as they look at him the giver of glory. I can take the crown, most gladly, from the head of all my graces, as they do from the head of their glory, and cast it down at his loving feet. "Worthy is the Lamb." He is—he is—blessings on him for ever and ever!

Ought not I to say so, indebted as I am to that precious Lamb of God? You see how he has dealt with me: the kindness, the gentleness of his ways, his royal bounty, the magnificence of his love. Adore and praise him with me and for me. And learn, my dear friend, from what I have here related, to trust him more. When he shows you your vile heart, your poor works, when dreadful corruptions stir, and are ready to break out, go to him freely, boldly; stop not a moment to reason with your own proud spirit, but fall down at his footstool. Tell him just what you feel. He loves to hear our complaints poured with confidence into his bosom. And never, never on earth, will you get such fellowship with him, so close, so blessed, as when you converse with him in this poverty of spirit. Let nothing keep you from him; whatever you meet with, let it drive you to him; for all good is from him, and all evil is turned into good by him. Oh wondrous Saviour! Here I was going on, and I hope in this theme never to stop; but the Rev. Mr. —— is come in—one just ordained. I do not leave Jesus to talk to him, but I am going to talk to him of sweet Jesus. To him I commend you and yours. Believe me very truly yours in that most lovely Lord Christ, most precious Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCXLIX.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 27, 1767.

My very dear Friend.—I have been waiting for good news, but in vain. I wanted some satisfactory answer to your last, and though I can give you none, yet I take up my pen to make an apology for the great Lord (who will not send you a minister) lest you should begin to think hardly of him, and of me too, his poor servant. I would have you to remember, that the government is upon his shoulders—the government of heaven and earth. His church is the object of his special government. It is his *body*—bought with his blood—quickened by his Spirit—kept by his power—blest with his love. All its concerns are upon his heart: his eyes are upon ——: he sees his people there with perfect complacency; and they shall want nothing that he has to give. Among the rest he beholds you and yours, and is managing all for your good. All shall be blest to you, your relations, your house, your substance, your state of body and of mind, your life and death, things temporal and spiritual. He will turn all things into blessings; for he does all things well. He does not, he cannot make one mistake in his government; no, not the least. He is wisdom, he is love, he is power itself. Infinite wisdom directs his love, and sets it to work; and, being almighty, he makes all things work together for the best to his dear people. You are as dear to him at ——, as we are at London. When he knows it to be right, he will send you a pastor after his own heart: and when he does not want one there, you cannot get one. When it is right you should be comforted, you shall be humbled, and then your consolations shall abound: and when it is right you should be low and mourning, he will bring good, yea, joy out of heaviness. Think of all that his power can do; his love disposes, his covenant binds him, to do it for his people.

Oh, blessed Mrs. ——! What a happy woman are you! Jesus is yours. All he is, all he has (and mind, he is Lord of all things) is yours. Who is like unto your Jesus? None, none in heaven or earth: for your Friend has all power in heaven and earth, and he will use it for your good, to keep you, to guide you, to give you what is best, what he knows to be best; and has, as such, appointed for you in his wise counsel and purpose of grace. Leave yourself, then, to his care and management; yourself and yours. Trust him for a pastor. Faith is

the best way to get one. Ask of him, believing, and Mr. ——, or some you never heard of, shall be sent. Believe for your mercies, and you cannot want your mercies. If you take notice of God's dealings, you will find that God never takes away what you are enjoying by faith. All things are possible, both to get and to keep to him that believeth. And when belief goes, all goes. And well it is so: for that which is not enjoyed by faith, is not worth enjoying. It can bring no real good to us, and no glory to God; therefore we had better be without it. In this holy art of believing for our blessings, I wish you most heartily a great proficient. Faith alone makes the difference. I would have you daily to practise it for every earthly good thing you enjoy; then shall it produce a gladness of heart—but without faith it will not be to your true solid comfort, because not sanctified. You see how open I write, my very heart appears. For I know your weak side. There I fear for you: and my fear is an holy fear. I fear for God's glory, in the use of a comfort so near your very soul, and I know of no way but what I now tell you. *Believe for your mercies.* That will secure God's honour, and your comfort. To the sweet arms of your divine lover, I commend you and yours, that he would give you grace to trust all your earthly comforts daily in the Saviour's care. This I shall entreat for you, being very heartily yours in that loveliest of all loves.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCL.

Blackfriars, *Oct.* 27, 1769.

My dear Friend.—Finding the cover of this letter yesterday, it put me in mind of our past correspondence, and brought back into pleasing reflection many agreeable interviews with you and yours. I was resolved therefore to make use of this cover, Providence, I thought, had put in my way. It is to be sent as directed, to be a witness for me of my constant attachment to you and your family, as of my uninterrupted affection. Go, letter, and say so. Assure them that I am still the same in heart, in deed, wishing and praying to approve myself to be unfeignedly theirs. And tell them my reason; it is because, through grace, I am the same in heart, in deed, to my spiritual friend; wishing and praying to approve myself to be unfeignedly his in all things. Upon better acquaintance I am become settled in my love, and rest in it. I have some little intimacy with the friend of sinners, and what he manifests to me of himself increases affection. He teaches me to loathe myself; every day he lets me see and feel the total ruin of this body of sin and death, and will not let me look at any thing in or of myself from whence I may draw one moment's comfort. Thus he makes himself more lovely. Self-loathing renders him precious. The more we get out of self, the more we grow into Jesus. Tired of our works and duties, we learn to value his righteousness. Feeling we cannot keep ourselves, we know how to trust his faithfulness, who hath undertaken to keep his people unto the end. Oh what a friend is this! whose love is like himself; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This sense of his love makes his people loving. And his love to them is the bond of all their holy love to one another. Having put on Christ, they put on with him kindness, brotherly love, bowels of mercies, &c. Some of these, but I do not boast, I feel to you, and my dear friends with you. May our love be mutual, increasing continually in every sweet and holy affection. The love of Christ will constrain to this; it spreads like leaven. Every act not only brings forth, but also diffuses, its sweet influence. Whenever I remember you, and make mention of you at our Court, the King not only hears, but approves, and makes the love expressed to be love abounding. The holy flame spreads as it burns; so that every affection, as it increases in its attachment to our glorious head, makes us more truly loving to all his members.

My dear friend, I wish you was more intimate with this loving Jesus. And

why not? what has he done to make you shy of him? all your complaints about yourself are no bar: they are so many ties and bonds constraining you to love him; yea, he will love to hear them from you, as matters of faith. Whatever you are, or feel of sin, misery, helplessness, &c. if rightly managed, should increase your knowledge of and dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, all that you meet with, till you meet him face to face, should bring you into more experience of his perfect salvation, and of his free love to bestow it on such as you. By which means you would be growing daily in the excellency of the knowledge of your Lord, and would be more conformed to his image and example. May you and I increase daily in this heavenly friendship, and love him in our measure, as he loved us. I am just returned from a journey of seven hundred miles; ashamed and confounded at his mercies to me and mine; and yet to pour my praises to his grace, so mean my services in his own work, that I am forced to cry for mercy on my best sermons and labours. I am returned home self-abased, carrying this truth written on my heart, and desiring to manifest it in outward conversation. Let him that glorieth, glory only in the Lord Jesus. I saw Lady H——, who was pure and well, and preached at her chapel at Bath: she had not received satisfactory, or I think she said no answer at all from the lord chancellor; but he must give such an answer as our Lord Chancellor pleases: that is our comfort. My love to Mr. ——: I am going to pray for him. All covenant blessings be with you and yours. The Lord spare —— for his mercies sake! I do not know what you would all do, if he who gave him was to take him away; and, remember, he has a right to do it when he will. Farewell, farewell. I am yours in our dear Lord and Keeper,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLI.

May, 1768.

THANK you, my good friend, for remembering me. I begun to have some hard thoughts of you, but they are gone: time has taught me that old friends are better than new, and grace has improved this experience; for friends in Christ will be so for ever. We may part, but only to meet again. Love can reach from London to ——; yes, a great way farther. I feel my heart just now united to ——, and rejoice from my soul that Jesus has taken her up to himself: thanks be to him for the grace she had, and the glory she had received out of his fulness. Blessings on him, that we are going the same way, to meet our best friend, and all our friends; and to be with him our heaven-making Jesus, and to be with them for evermore. I was led from reading your letter to a very comfortable view of the Prince of Life. I thought I saw him in that character, exceedingly amiable and glorious: and the more I considered it, the more lovely it grew to the eye of faith. For it seemed to me that sin and death came into the world with all their train of evils, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. *Wonderful* is his name, who can bring righteousness out of sin. What a miracle-working Jesus is he, who can make life out of death! Indeed, all he does is in this strange way, peculiar to himself, that his might be the crown of crowns. As a Jesus, he not only saves from the evil of sin and death—this is the least part of his matchless work—but he also, in the free gift of his sovereignty, bestows righteousness and life; and, to the everlasting praise of his sovereignty, bestows them on the most unrighteous, and on the most dead in sin. In this praise, how glorious is our Jesus! My heart is now captivated with this inimitable loveliness, although I see him through a glass darkly: what must he be in full and open view, when the display of his beauty will make an eternal heaven! I knew one, who was admitted as that happy soul was, Cant. ii. 9, to see the divine lover looking forth at the window, and showing himself, or, as it is in the margin, *flourishing*, open and expanding like a flower his beauties and fragrance

through the lattice window. It was a ravishing sight. If the eye and senses of faith can be thus highly delighted, what will it be to see him face to face, and to enjoy his fulness of glory? since he thus by the death of our friends can let us behold some fresh discovering of his life-giving charms. What—oh what will it be to us, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life? Yet a little, a very little while, and this shall be. In the mean time, may you and I be growing in the knowledge and love of the Prince of Life. I got a good advancement by the death of Lady M——t, and was led into a sweet path of meditation, in which I went on meditating and contemplating, till my heart burned within me. Methought he had given a noble display of the riches of grace in his dealings with her, and had made her a happy partaker of that life which he came to give unto his world. You can witness that he had repealed the sentence of death. She was freed from condemnation, and was passed from death unto life. He gave her to know it, to enjoy it. Many a time my spirit has been refreshed with hearing her relate simply and feelingly how Jesus was her life. And in consequence of this, having peace with God, through Jesus Christ her Lord, she had an attachment to his person. You can tell, better than I can, how she showed this. She was certainly spiritually alive, and he who made her so kept her so, to as great manifesting of his power as if he had preserved the burning bush in Horeb in flames, and yet unhurt, from Moses to this day. This spiritual life bodily death cannot touch, because it is rooted and grounded into the divine life. And the keeping of it is laid up with Christ in God, safe, happy, out of the reach of storms and enemies. What did I say, bodily death cannot touch it? I retract that word: bodily death does what the angel did to Peter in prison; knocks off his fetters, and sets him at liberty; the angel of life takes down the mortal, that he may perfect the immortal life, and so we die to live;—die to the world, to live with him; die to time, to live for ever; yea, die in faith, that this body of death, which we leave behind us, shall soon be raised to life and immortality. Is death our enemy? What has he done to hurt?—Only fulfilled the kind will of Jesus who wanted her company, and would have her with him, to live as he does in his life of glory. Blessed death, heavenly comforter, thou art a loving friend indeed to Jesus' friends! Your letter was the means of my entering on this meditation, and blessed it was. Oh what a sight and sense had I of the incomparable grace of life-giving Jesus! While I am writiing, he makes himself, beyond what any words can describe, lovely to my eyes, and precious to my heart. He is my life. I find it, enjoy it, in him; and let me speak, my dear friend, a word for him to you; *for him*, as I am in duty bound—*to you*, as love constrains me. For him I speak, a most complete, absolutely and eternally perfect Saviour. His person, his work, possessed of all the glories of the Godhead. What he did and suffered, in order that he might save to the uttermost, admits of no addition. It was once done and perfected for ever. My friend, have you the benefit of this? Do you enjoy it in your conscience; and there read, and there maintain, a full and everlasting repeal from the sentence of death? This is the honour Jesus claims of you, and it is the highest you can pay him. You can do him no greater homage, no more acceptable worship, than to put your entire dependence, without any the least drawing back, or wavering, on his life and death, as your whole deliverance from sin and death, as your clear title to heaven and glory. When faith shows you the divine majesty of Mary's Son, and the everlasting honours of his obedience unto death, then will the peace of God rule in your heart, and thereby you will glorify the blood and the righteousness of the Redeemer, more than any angel, more than any happy spirit around his throne.

The enemy long, too—too long, kept me from that enjoyment, by wiles and snares, chiefly legal views and self-righteous plans. Still he now and then gets an advantage of me. But I beg, my friend, you would beware of his devices. Are you resting upon Jesus? and do you find the sentence of death is no longer in force against you? Read, study your Bible, pray and beg for an increase of faith. This is the use of all means. May the Lord the Spirit bless them to you! Faith is your shield against the accuser of the brethren, and against your own legal workings. If you grow in this experience, you will grow more and more

alive to God; you will believe, and find more of the love of a reconciled Father. The more you rest on the finished salvation, you will certainly abound more in the blessed fruits of it: such as, seeing yourself perfectly saved, your hopes will all cast anchor within the veil; your affections will get fixed on their everlasting object, and you will come under the sweet government of King Jesus. Thus living *in* him, you will live *to* him, which is not only spiritual life, but is also, indeed, spiritual liveliness. And if you ever find this decay after you once had it, mind and attend to the cause of its decay, and you will see this was the only cause; namely, your faith was therefore not lively, because you were not resting perfectly upon Jesus, as your Saviour from the sentence of death. This was the worm which eat into the gourd, and made it wither. Keep this out; it will flourish and grow as long as you have any need of faith for protection, or for happiness: and when the time comes that faith is to be no more, what is dying? Is it not in the hand of Jesus? Does not he appoint it, fix it, send it? has not he promised to be with you in the hour of death, to keep you from the fear and from the power of it? is not he faithful, almighty, all-loving? His love wants no power to make his promises good to his dying friends; yea, he does make them good every day. He will to you, doubt it not. I have written till my time is up. You are sure my subject is not exhausted; no, never will be. But I am forced to stop. My dear friend, pray for me. You know my profession of love for your soul. God knows my heart. Adieu.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLII.

June 11.

THANKS to my dear friend for her last. It was a great refreshment to me. Oh, how does my spirit rejoice to see the blessed Jesus crowned and exalted in your soul, and no other name mentioned in your lips, no dependence upon any being or thing in your heart or life, but that God-Man. This is the point. Here may we fix. But, alas! although I would fix, and never so much as turn my eye from hence, I find so many enemies within and without, that it is hard keeping our hold, and never letting it go. In this warfare the flesh and the Spirit fight without ceasing; the flesh against Christ's sufficiency, and the Spirit for him. But, thanks be to his grace, the Spirit is almighty, and he has given the flesh in all believers a mortal wound, of which it will ere long bleed to death. And then, oh, blessed prospect, we shall see the Captain of our salvation, through whom we conquered, face to face! That is enough. There is heaven. May you and I, till we get there, learn daily to make more use of Christ. Our dear fellow soldier, Lady H——n, fights bravely. She went to Brighthelmstone this day se'nnight. I had a sweet letter from her this morning. She is happy in the adorable Immanuel, and lives to him and for him. Her only view in Sussex is to carry his glad tidings to a wretched, ignorant people. He has hitherto prospered her design, and while he smiles upon it, I believe she will not give it up.

God willing, I shall leave London on the 20th of this month; but am not yet determined how I shall travel. In hopes of the pleasure of meeting you, I will trouble you with a line, as soon as I know whether I ride, or come in the coach, or in a post chaise. My dear, ever, ever dear Lord and Master keep you! To his sweet and tender heart I commend you, and am, for his precious name's sake, your faithful friend and servant,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLIII

BLACKFRIARS, *May* 2, 1769.

I WROTE to my good friend at Christmas, and got an answer at Easter. Indeed, I began to think you had dropped me; for I make myself sure of nothing, but

of my dear Lord's unchangeable love. Yet I corrected myself for thinking so of you: but I was tempted, and I have combustible enough to feed any, yea, every temptation. The Lord keep me from others, as he did from this.

You ask my opinion of inoculation. People, who reason upon worldly motives, may do as they please. To others I would relate the case of a great doctor in divinity, and a great Christian, who had an only son. His wife was for, the doctor was against, inoculation. They had many disputes about it. The doctor said he could not do it in faith—the wife said she could do it, because she believed it to be for the best. Neither side would yield: so they agreed to put it off till the one or the other should give up their opinion, and both be of one mind. The child was thus left in God's hand—he got the small-pox in the natural way, and did well.

I attend to your complaints of yourself. They are true. You might make a thousand more, and alike true. But, my dear friend, what of all this? Is not Jesus the Saviour of such sinners as you are? Pray, take heed of getting into a complaining temper, and contracting a habit of it; for there is no greater enemy to Jesus, to the growth of your communion with him, and to the liveliness of your heart towards him. I would have you sensible of all your causes of complaint, but satisfied under them, and willing to be just what you are. In this poverty of spirit, needy, sinful, helpless, dependent temper, consists the very life of faith: for while you feel thus, every thing in you and about you says, "You must go to Jesus—you can do nothing without him—he must counsel, and strengthen, and comfort—he must save—he must be a Jesus to you every moment, and in every thing." What reply does the believer make? "It is true, without him I can do nothing—I am helpless, and his strength is perfected in my utter weakness; most gladly, therefore, do I glory in my weakness, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me." Oh, for more of Paul's happy experience! He had no such gladness as that which arose from communion with Jesus, and he gloried in that, which helped him to this communion, by making it absolutely necessary for him. He did not commit sin on purpose; but, being a sinner, he did not wish to be one in himself; it was his joy, yea, his crown of rejoicing that God-Jesus and sinful Paul were one. Here he found his heaven; Jesus was united to the sinner, as meat is to the hungry; and Paul lived upon him, feasted on him, enjoyed Jesus, as the hungry do their meat. It was such a feast, that Paul would not wish to have no appetite, but rather to have it enlarged, that he might live more upon the bread of God, and grow up more into Christ Jesus.

What! must I always be this poor needy sinner? Yes; always, till you get into heaven. And then you will be perfectly humbled, and have nothing within you to rob Jesus of any part of his glory. All your salvation, from the councils of eternity to the eternal fulfilment of them, will then be made plain; you will see, confess, and be happy in confessing, that sovereign grace did all for you, and in you. And in the perfect sense of this you will triumph in being a *sinner saved*, and in this you will triumph as long as heaven is heaven.

But thus you keep on complaining—"I find myself too often poring over my own inward sinfulness and misery, and consequently giving way to unbelief, whenever my poor reason tells me, I should be rejoicing in the God of my salvation." And what, then, unbelief is in you, felt or not; and unbelief given way to, is your burden—this makes for you. And it only proves that you are still at school, learning your second lesson, and that is, how the God of your salvation, being received, is to be enjoyed. You own he is received. You call him, the God of *my* salvation. Observe, my dear friend, now this Jesus is yours, *all* is yours. You have an undoubted right and title to Him, and to His—improve it, then, and make use of his fulness. Your estate is clear and boundless; you have only to receive the income of it in grace, as well as in glory. I pray you, my dear friend, to study this lesson, and if the Lord the Spirit help you to learn it well, it will save you from many an aching heart. Observe, Jesus is yours: after this, you are not to seek for any new title to any part of salvation. This is also secured; but you are called upon to enjoy the purchased salvation, and to be a happy receiver out of the Saviour's fulness. Suppose you live thus ever so well, receive ever so much, what you enjoy in Christ is no part of your title

to Christ; what you receive from Christ is not your title to pardon, to righteousness, or to holiness. He is received for these purposes. He, Christ himself; and your enjoying him for these purposes is not your title to pardon, &c. What Christ does for you, or in you, or by you, is not to be looked at so as not to look still simply at Christ himself. What he is, and what he did for you, here is all your salvation. What he does in you, or by you, here is the enjoyment of this salvation in its fruits and effects: but these fruits and effects do not make you holy;—oh, no, the poor beggars who are fed at our king's table will never say—we pay the king for our meat by eating a great deal; or, his meat feeds us, and therefore we make ourselves strong;—or, his grace nourishes us, and therefore, we make ourselves holy. No, no; they are taught better. They will always acknowledge—the more we receive out of the fulness of Jesus, we find ourselves more happy, and the fruits of our interest in him are more abundant to our comfort, and to his glory, but our debt increases; and the better we are fed and clothed, and kept up with his royal bounty, he leaves us nothing to glory in, except his overflowing grace. In this spirit his people hear, and read, and pray, and attend means and ordinances; they do not seek holiness in these—not to be made holy by them—but they do attend in faith, sanctified first by the faith that is in Jesus, and in that faith enjoying him in all they do. Christ is my sanctification before I can do any thing aright, and what I do aright does not make me holy, but shows that I am holy. Every living branch is ingrafted into the root and stock of holiness, and its leaves and fruit do not make it to be in the vine, but only prove that it is in it. A member is not made living by doing its office. The eye does not live by seeing, but it is a living eye, and therefore sees. You must be a living member in the mystical body before you can do your office in it. Doing your office does not make you, but only shows that you are a living member. My dear friend, weigh these things well. I verily believe the Holy Spirit is now teaching you this lesson; for I see you cannot be content with yourself, nor your graces, nor gifts: improve this divine teaching, and learn to build all your hopes of holiness on Christ, made of God sanctification for you. And the more clearly you believe this, you will love the God of your salvation more; your spiritual enemies will be more subdued, and in heart and life you will be more devoted to God, to his ways and will. I give you this advice from my own knowledge. Give me credit, and try, and you will soon find cause to give God his glory.

I hope to look upon you, and say on this subject more than I can on paper Remember me in love and respect. The good will of your unchangeable Friend be with you and yours, and me and mine.

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLIV.

BRIGHTHELMSTONE, *July* 20.

JESUS be yours, all he is, and all he has! Then you will be as rich as an archangel. I hope he will be my guide, and bring me to —— on Friday next, between one and two. I am not sure, because I have not taken a place in the stage, nor shall, till I go to London, which will be on Tuesday next. If I cannot come in the stage, perhaps I may see you before. We go on sweetly in this place. Christ is indeed exalted, and reigns glorious in many a heart, as I wish he may in yours. He does—but not as you could wish. May he captivate you more with his infinite beauty, and enable you to live more blessed upon his infinite fulness, that he may keep his royal court in your soul! The more you are acquainted with him, you will grow in love: for he is altogether lovely; an immense ocean of everlasting love. The whole world is but a drop of his love—what must heaven be, where his love is to be glorified and enjoyed for ever? There we shall see him: oh, for that day! But even, by the way, as he walks with us, he makes our hearts burn within us. These sweet foretastes of his love draw us on, and whet an appetite A few more of these, and we shall get to the

fountain-head, and drink rivers of pleasure for evermore. To his precious dear heart's love I commend you and yours, and am, for his sake, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLV.

Sweet Jesus be with my dear friend! I promised you a note as soon as I was determined what way I should travel. It is now fixed for the —— stage, in which, God willing, I shall reach —— on Friday, the 24th of this month, about 12 o'clock at noon, where I hope to see some faces from —— to rejoice my heart, with whom to talk a little of our time away about that dear, dearest of all dears; the only one worth talking about. I know not of any good use the tongue is at present, but to be telling of his salvation from day to day, in the praise of which salvation it will be employed for ever and ever. May your heart and mine be ever warm with his love, and then our tongues cannot help telling of what our hearts feel. To his precious love I commend you and yours, and am, for the sake of that dear man of sorrows, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

P. S.—Strange doings at ——! A party for me, another against me. Violent on both sides. Alas, alas! what is all this about? I sent word I should preach there on Sunday, the 26th; I know not whether they will let me: if they do, I hope you will mount me on that very quiet mare I heard of last year. But more of these things when we meet. Jesus be with you. *Amen, Amen.*

LETTER CCLVI.

Blackfriars, *March* 5, 1770.

My very dear Friend.—I waited on ——, and he told me he was to call at —— in his way home. I could not resist the opportunity of sending in writing my thanks for your last kind letter. My heart rejoices, and is thankful for many things which you say in it, of your dependence on the finished salvation of Jesus, and of your desire to experience more of his graces and blessings. I see what stops you; the very same that stops me. And I would lay before you the gospel motives and encouragements to get on, revealed in the word, and I hope in some measure made useful to me by the Spirit of God.

I have remarked in conversing with you, and in all your letters, the workings of a legal and self-righteous temper, apt to nurse guilty fears, and to cherish misgivings and suspicions of your interest in the great salvation. The same are daily disturbing my peace, and are the very plague of my life. The only remedy against them is to look well to the conscience, where they have their rise, and to use all appointed means for establishing it in the peace of God. This is the main point. A holy walk, and successful warfare, depend entirely on the testimony of conscience. The believer's chief business is to learn to resist and to overcome guilt, fear, and unbelief, that, these being kept out of his conscience, the peace of God may rule there always, and by all means. Then it will be what the Scripture calls "a good conscience." And when this is good, all goes on well. Now, that is a good conscience which witnesses to the truth as it is in Jesus. Conscience, I suppose, is that faculty of the soul which, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, compares the sinner's heart and life with the holy law of God, brings him in guilty for transgressing its precepts, and leaves him under guilt and condemnation, to suffer its just penalties. The gospel sets forth to him an infinitely perfect righteousness to satisfy the precepts; and an everlastingly sufficient atonement, even the sacrifice of Jehovah Jesus, to satisfy the penalties of the law. When he is enabled to

believe in this righteousness, and in this atonement, his conscience is saved from guilt and condemnation; yea, it acquits and justifies the sinner, and brings in a true verdict for him. It says the same that God himself does: pleads its discharge from the express words of the great charter of grace, under the broad seal of heaven. With the royal grants and immunities therein graciously vouchsafed, it stops the mouth of unbelief. "Thou art freely forgiven all trespasses; thou art justified from all things; thou art a son of my love, and shall be an heir of my glory; I, even I, the Lord God, am thine, and thou shalt be mine for ever." Here the believer triumphs; and why may not you and I too? I do, thanks be to infinite grace. I believe these words on the testimony of God, as spoken to me. My conscience bears witness to the truth of the divine record. It is now a good conscience: it agrees with God, and looks upon him as reconciled perfectly; it fears to dishonour him, by calling in question the infinite value of Christ's righteousness and atonement, or by doubting of their being mine, while I feel my want of them, and have any dependence upon them. Thus the peace of God rules, takes the lead in the conscience, and subdues guilty fears; rules always. The covenant is like the divine Covenanters in the Godhead, always the same; the free grant of the righteousness and atonement of Immanuel always the same; my want of them always the same; and mine interest, though not in my sense, yet in God's purpose, always the same. These gospel motives should teach you and me to maintain this peace always, and by all means. Every thing should help to promote it. Corruptions, enemies, temptations from every quarter, should, by all means, establish our hearts in the peace of God: we should be trying at it, fighting for it; and, as it is our privilege, we should never yield, but fight hard to keep a conscience void of offence. This is warring a good warfare, when we hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.

Believe me, my dear friend, the management of your conscience is the first and great lesson in the school of Christ. And your chief mistakes and falls come from its not being governed by the Word and Spirit of God. Look to it, then, and hear, and read, and pray, and walk; that the testimony of your conscience may be agreeable to the truth, as it is in Jesus. Insomuch, that, when you feel any thing wrong, when you are low in spirits, your sins displease, your duties cannot please you, you should remember that these very things, rightly managed, will establish your conscience in the peace of God; because they will bring you to live entirely by the faith of the Son of God. Every new day you live to learn from them, that you have nothing to trust to but the righteousness and the atonement of Jesus; and, therefore, depending on this sure foundation, you may safely build your hopes of God's being in friendship with you, yea, in an unchangeable and everlasting friendship. Oh that your heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience; and mind, that is an evil one, which, through unbelief, refuses to build its peace upon the life and death of Immanuel. And that is a good conscience, which has peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, and expects all the love of the Father to come freely through his Son. This is the second lesson in the school of Christ—"How shall the heart be made and kept happy in the love of God?" I answer, by believing that he is perfectly reconciled, and loves you. While there is guilt in the conscience, and you look upon the law broken, the punishment deserved, and the almighty Judge engaged to inflict it, you can no more love God than you can love pain. But when you hear the Gospel preaching peace by Jesus Christ, and can mix faith with it, then God is discovered as related to you in the closest bond of love, even your dearest Friend, your most loving Father; which will draw out the affections of your heart to him: "For we love him, because he first loved us." His love is first, yours is second: his is the cause, yours is the effect. He enables you to believe his love to you, and that excites your love to him.

You see, then, how much depends upon the testimony of the conscience. When this is on Christ's side, and bears a faithful witness for him, then your heart will be happy; you will have joy and peace in believing, "God is reconciled to me; he is my God; we are agreed, and now we walk together. He bids me call him *Father;* and I know he has bowels of love and fatherly affection for me: he sees me, accepts me in Jesus, and rests in his love to me. My title is

clear to all spiritual blessings; because, God being my God and Father, *all* things are mine."

If you live like a Christian, these should be the constant breathings of your heart. Your happy walk depends entirely on the belief of God's being perfectly reconciled to you in his Son. And, therefore, you should not be aiming at getting any new title to your heavenly Father's love, but at new enjoyment. *All* is yours in title; but you are to seek for more, still more possession; every day you should be seeking to believe more, to enjoy more of the riches of your Father's love in Jesus. And nothing will stop your growing enjoyment, if the peace of God rule in your heart always, and *by all means*.

My dear friend, attend closely to this: for want of it, oh, what sad mistakes have I made! You will always find, when your heart departs from the Lord, that there has been some guilt laying upon the conscience, and representing God to you in some other light than as your most loving Father. But, pray mind, he has always the affection, as well as the name. He changeth not in his love. He is to all his children ever of one mind. And, therefore, when you desire to enjoy his love, and in the enjoyment of it to find your heart happy, look at nothing to bring you to the Father but the Son. Read your share in his love; take possession of it; for nothing done in you, or by you, now, or at any time, but only *in* and *for* the salvation of Jesus, in whom his Father is your Father. Thus walk with him; making Christ your way, and Christ your end. Keep walking on, leaning upon Christ every step for strength, for victory over all corruptions and over all enemies, which would try to stop you from the enjoyment of your Father's love. Trust in Christ for all the blessings of it, for every thing that can keep you safe, and make you happy all your way: and depend upon it, through Christ, you will find the company and presence of your God and Father a very heaven here, as well as in glory.

Mrs. ——, would you daily walk with a happy heart? Then you must learn to make up all your happiness in the love which the Father bears to you in his dear Son. This is to be all your salvation, and all your *desire*. You must look quite away from your graces, your gifts, your duties. God does not love you *for* these: he loves you in his Son; and you in believing this are to exercise your graces and gifts, and to be found in the way of duty, that you may have fellowship with him in his love.

This is the hardest task of all. I find it so to this day, and I know your temptations: therefore, I would finish this long scrawl with an account of the influence of the former truths. Get a ready answer to this question—"How are my tempers to be regulated, and my conversation to be so ordered, that I may night and day enjoy the peace and the love of my reconciled God and Father?" The way is, to *walk humbly with your God*. Do not disown what the Holy Spirit has taught you: give him the honour of his own grace: he has, indeed he has, learnt you to say, Abba, Father, God is *your* Father in Jesus. Walk humbly with him, as such: so will you enjoy his sweet peace, and partake of his happy love. While these rule in the conscience and in the heart, the tempers opposite to them will be resisted and overcome. The Divine Teacher will discover the secret workings of guilt and unbelief, and keep them from destroying the peace of conscience By his almighty grace he will mortify carnal affections, and crucify every idol love: he will preserve the heart, as a chaste virgin, for its heavenly *Lover*. Rebel nature will resist, yea, always; but it cannot overcome the Lord God omnipotent; he *will*; nay, let me say he *has*. I appeal to yourself. Speak out for God. Does not your conscience say, "I will have nothing to do with any pretensions to be my own Saviour; the righteousness of Jesus and his atonement on the tree, are all my salvation." Does not your heart say, (I am sure I have heard you say) "This is all my desire." Do not your hopes say, "We have cast our anchor upon Jesus; thank God, we can never be disappointed." Do not your fears say, "I would not for the world do any thing to displease my God and Father. Blessed Spirit, rule in me, rule over me, mortify the old man, and quicken the new man day by day."

Since God has done all this for you, on, do not dishonour his work by hearken-

ing to proud self, the old man of sin, who is ever reasoning within you against the glory of Divine grace. He would have you to look at yourself, and to draw your safety and happiness from some pleasing views of your own goodness. He will be always tempting you to this: but remember, that you are not to look at, or to depend in the least upon, yourself, but wholly upon God reconciled in Jesus. Whatever is your own, and comes from self, is to show you the necessity of *walking humbly with your God*. Do not you feel to this hour, that self is made up of sinfulness, wants, temptations, and miseries? None of these should stop you, but each should help to make you walk more humbly with your God. They are to show you your constant need of salvation, and to keep you always dependent on God for it. No failings in duty, no sense of indwelling sin, no weakness, no opposition should separate you in conscience or heart from your reconciled God, but should bring you to walk in nearer fellowship with him: by which alone you will enjoy more conformity to him. Pride will be hid from you. Every high thought will be brought down: grace, sovereign grace, will reign. And the Lord will receive *all*, I am sure it is his due, *all* the glory.

Here is a wide field before me: but I stop. When you send me word that you have learnt so to manage the weapons of your warfare as to be able to maintain peace in your conscience, and happiness in your heart, and victory in your tempers and walk, then I will take up the subject where I leave off, and go on with it. In the mean time, remember this great truth—God is *your* Father in Jesus; you know it by faith; yea, you enjoy the comforts of it; and, therefore, the end of your walk is not to procure a title to your Father's love, but to maintain the enjoyment of it. May the Lord the Spirit make you a happy partaker of it every day more abundantly.

I hear of the goodness of our dear Lord to ——. I bless him from my heart for her. May she never want his rich cordials to comfort her soul as long as she has a body of sin and death to struggle with. My respects to all that family. May God sanctify the present dispensation to every one of them.

My kind love to Mr. ——, and to Mr. John, and every good wish for that favourite child. He grows a fine boy, and says many pretty things. Take care, my friends, of your hearts; he has rather too much room in them. Grow in love to the Giver, as you grow in love to him, and all will be well.

Recommend me to Mr. B——y; beg him for Jesus' sake to put up prayers for a cumberer of the ground. I am sure I do not forget him. May he never forget me before a throne of grace.

See how I scribble on! Throw a veil of love over all, and believe me to be in bonds never to be broken, tied by the hand of Jesus, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLVII.

My good Friend.—I have many reasons to remember your being last year at Bath. Among other things I sent you down the first lesson, which the great and good Master teaches all his scholars. I cannot tell how well you learned it. But I understand he is very kind to you, and is taking a great deal of pains to make you a proficient. He sees how desirous you are of going to heaven, with this and the other comfort by the way: you are apt to think, as I do, that being such an infinitely loving Lord, he might very well spare it you—you might keep it, and yet keep his love. But herein we form a wrong judgment of him. For he does all things well—yea, he intends to do better for you, far better than you can even imagine. He loves you more than you can possibly love yourself; and he will send you nothing but what is for your real and best interest, and he will let you find it so. His love is almighty, and it is unchangeable. What cannot he do, what will he not do, when his heart is set upon blessing his people? It is a common thing with him to bring spiritual good out of temporal evil: he can extract pleasure out of pain; yea, he can enrich by impoverishing,

and turn losses into gain. Unto you it is now given, as a matter of his choice favour, not only to believe on him, but also to be conformed to him by bearing *his* cross. This he is aiming at. He is going to advance you to great honour, and to make you comforted on every side. At this very time he is training you up for it. He is now going to confer some of his special mercies, some of the greatest blessings he has to give on earth; which he bestows in so certain and fixed a way, that I know his mind and will concerning you, as plainly here in London as if I was with you at ——, and you were to tell me all your thoughts: for, indeed, our Jesus is very communicative. He keeps nothing from his friends—"And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" &c. Gen. xviii. 17, 18, &c. No: He is of my court, and I will make him of my cabinet; Abraham shall be my privy counsellor. And the same Lord has raised you and me to the same dignity. Thus our patent runs: "Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you *friends*, therefore all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Our divine teacher still makes known to us what he doeth. He reveals his will, and lays open his heart. And according to what I have discovered of it, your second lesson is this. May he breathe upon it by his Spirit, and bless to your soul every line you read. Oh that all within you may say from a feeling submission to his loving correction—"Lord Jesus Christ, not my will, but thine be done."

The second lesson of the cross—or the exercise of faith in suffering.

1. They that have their portion in this life prosper in the world, they increase in riches, they come into no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men.

2. But whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

3. He dealeth with them as with sons, having chosen them all in the same election of grace, prepared for them the same inheritance, and decreed that they should go the same way to it.

4. He will not exempt one of them, no, not his only begotten Son, who went to his crown carrying his cross; and whom the Father did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.

5. Of this he has graciously forewarned them, that they might not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try them, as though some strange thing had befallen them: he has also promised to be with them, when they walk through the fire, and they shall not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon them. And,

6. When they come out of the furnace, they shall find many blessed fruits of righteousness, which could not have grown or been ripened by any other means.

7. Art thou, then, oh my soul, expecting the cross as thy portion, prepared to take it up as the honourable badge of thy discipleship, and ready to carry it daily, following Jesus?

8. Canst thou take it up in faith? Is this the right frame of thy heart, "God is my God, my Father in Jesus. He loves me with an unchangeable love, which influences all his dealings with me, and especially his present dispensation: for,

9. He not only loves me with an everlasting love, but he is also now waiting to communicate it to me: my present cross is his way and means of bringing it to my heart, and of bestowing on me some of its richest blessings."

10. True it is painful to the flesh: but the flesh fighteth always against the spirit, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; and therefore the cross must be laid and must be kept upon it, in order to weaken its power, and also to strengthen the new man day by day.

11. There is a *needs must* for the daily cross to keep down pride, and to bring every high thought of *self* into subjection to Christ Jesus, that we may be always learning of him to be meek and lowly.

12. Looking at the cross in this light, as the loving appointment of the

Father's will, and as the means of improving faith in the Son's salvation, through the grace of the eternal Spirit, how dost thou, oh my soul, find it when it comes?

13. How is it with thee when the cross is upon thy back, and thou art carrying a heavy painful load after Jesus?

14. Dost thou see Him before thee, who went in the same way? and dost thou honour his promises, and rely upon his faithfulness to carry both thee and thy cross?

15. When thou art chastised, and sharply, canst thou kiss the rod, and bless the kind hand which takes such pains to purge out thy corruptions?

16. And when the smart continues from day to day, dost thou so far profit from it, as to be able to say from thy very heart, *Father, thy will be done?* Happy soul! for then thou art a partaker of his holiness.

17. When it is the will of the Father to spare the child, what profit has appeared, after he has removed the cross for a time?

18. Are there any peaceable fruits of righteousness growing or ripening in the heart? Is there more joy and peace in the Son's salvation, and more happy enjoyment of the Father's love?

19. Has the Holy Spirit deadened the life of sense, by putting the cross upon it, and thereby produced more liveliness to spiritual and to eternal things?

20. Say, is the harvest good and plentiful? Do the graces flourish? Have faith and patience been in exercise, and improved? Has resignation to the divine will been in practice, and the good of submitting to it learned by experience?

21. Thrice happy soul to whom the cross is thus sanctified! yet a very little while, and faith and patience having done their perfect work, the cross will be no more, but the crown will be for ever.

My very dear friend, this is my present lesson; and though I am a dull scholar, yet I get on a little. I wish you may get before me; for I am told the Master takes great pains with you; and I believe it. I am very certain you must carry your cross all the way through this valley of Baca. And what can I wish you better than that you may find the rain filling the pools, and you may go from strength to strength? When the Lord strikes at your comforts (and mind, your cross grows out of your comforts), oh that your heart may then feel submission, whatever nature feels! may all within you, guided and strengthened by grace, be able to say, Lord, take away what thou wilt, only take not away the light of thy loving countenance. When thou removest any of my comforts, let me not forget they were thine: thy free gift, lent me by thy love, and kept long for me by thy bounty. And now thou art pleased to require them, Lord, make thy will mine, and fill up the place which they had in my heart with thy precious love. So be it, Lord Jesus. *Amen.*

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLVIII.

Nov. 13, 1770.

My very dear Friend.—Since last Thursday I have been in your service, heartily in it. I cannot charge myself with any neglect: and I went on more cheerfully, because I thought it was my dear Master's work, which made it pleasant. But when I heard the living was last night given to a Mr. ——, judge what a blow this was; I felt exceedingly for you. I thought of Mr. M——, and the poor people at K——, deprived of the greatest blessing short of heaven. Oh my friend! indeed I was grieved sore, and began to complain and murmur—"Why could not the Lord have given his people a pastor after his own heart? Would it not have been for his glory? Are there not many precious souls in and about K—— who will now want their daily bread?" Thus my heart was grieved; and it went even through my reins; so foolish was I, and ignorant. But I am recovered, and got into my right mind. Now I confess the Lord reigneth. He can make no mistake in his government. He does all things well, both for his

own glory, and for his people's good. Mr. B—'s removal, a poor dead stick in his room, the joyful sound heard no more in K——, the mourners going about wringing their hands in the streets, &c. &c. &c.; put as many more complaints as you please, yet every one of them shall be made to work together for good. He has said it, and shall he not do it? yes, he will do it; and you shall know it, too. This very visitation shall be overruled to bring about many gracious purposes, perhaps such as these;

First, a submission to his sovereign will; that you may say, "All is well."

Secondly, self-examination: was it not for my fault, my not valuing, not being thankful for, not improving the blessed gospel, that the Lord has removed our candlestick?

Thirdly, living upon Jesus more. When the streams dry up, then people are forced to go to the fountain-head: so the means failing, his people must live upon the Lord of all means.

Fourthly, living more upon the word. If it cannot be heard, blessed be God, it may be read; prize it, meditate on it, lay it near your heart. May it be as sweet as honey, and as precious as gold, yea, as much fine gold. One single sermon to an hungry soul will be as blessed as ten thousand to one who has no appetite.

Fifthly, trust the Lord for making an opening for the gospel, even at K——, in his own way. You cannot see how; why, then, that is the time to trust, pray, believe, wait. For,

Sixthly, if the shepherd has any of his flock at K——, which I cannot doubt, then they cannot perish for lack of knowledge. He will either send the gospel to them, or them to it.

I own it is a trying time. If I was in your circumstances, I should want all that can be said to make me think the Lord was doing right; and therefore, my dear friend, I would lead you to some comfortable view of this matter. The blessed God enable you to give it up to him, and in patience to possess your soul! If your private loss be very distressing, try to divert the grief, and look at the public loss. Oh what has the church suffered in the setting of that bright star which has shone so gloriously in our hemisphere! Mr. Whitfield's preaching is over: now he is praising. We have none left to succeed him: none of his gifts, none any thing like him in usefulness. But the same glorious Jesus, who gave him to us, has taken him away. If he wants another such, he can make him out of a stone. Well, then, let us submit; let him alone, let him alone. His interest at K——, his interest in England, is as dear to him as the apple of his eye. He is managing all for the best. May you and I bow the knee, and say, "Thy will be done."

I have no more time but to follow this letter with my prayers, that the great Head of the church may teach you practically what I have been mentioning. And, depend upon it, a day will come when you will see this was right. Only wait; blessed are they that wait for him. Farewell, my good friend, and believe me to be yours in that dearest, sweetest Jesus,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLIX.

Nov. 27, 1770.

DEAR FRIEND.—I hope we are not going to try our skill at saying fine things in the way of complimenting: I confess myself to be a malevolent creature, and have no good, and do no good, but from mere grace. Let it have all the glory. It is true, my heart is in the affair of K——, but I need not tell you, at this time of day, how much I am interested in the welfare of you and of yours. At present, it wears a promising aspect. This morning I breakfasted with my Lord C——r S——, and lady. They do not see you have the least reason to doubt but in a short time Mr. B—— will be vicar of K——, and they said many

kind things of you and your family. I long for the day when my letter is to be directed to the Rev Mr. B——, vicar of K——. It cannot be far off, if the commissioners' calculation be true, that they have had a living vacant every fortnight and two days.

You cannot think how much I felt myself obliged to Mr. —— for his very kind letter. I know he does not love writing, which made it more acceptable. I beg my sincere respects to him. The matter must rest as it is, till there be a vacancy. The Lord will give you waiting faith; it is the strongest faith of all! And you will have this, and every thing needful, if you continue asking in that dear name, which carries all causes in the court of heaven. Oh keep on praying. I do love these meetings of prayer. The living of K—— was actually given away, the presentation was signed, and yet Mr. S—— cannot get it. Your prayers have prevailed. If ever there was an answer to prayer, this is. Oh that God may make it an encouragement to all of you to pray without ceasing! I am sure it has done me good, and opened mine eyes to see more of the glory of a prayer-hearing God.

Excuse my going on; my time is not mine own; I have lent it to the public, till this book of the "Walk of Faith" comes out. It was to have been about the size of the "Life of Faith;" but is already got much larger. My friends, who have seen it, will not let me abridge it, but say I must add a little more, and it will be two small volumes. My dear friend, pray for it. May God make it a sweet savour of his adorable name! It is a book of many prayers, and is the life and character of yours, in Jesus,

W. Romaine.

My wife thanks Miss B—— for her polite letter. The civilities she received were very hearty and sincere. As my wife was but poorly all the time they were in town, it is very kind in Miss B—— to look upon them in so favourable a light.

My love to the Rev. Mr. B——: I am also overpaid by his note; so we need say no more of that. I desire to share in his prayers: and do very particularly beg him to ask for a blessing upon my little books; they have been very much blessed to the author: may the same blessing attend all that read them. Mr. M—— is in my prayers. My love to Miss W——. I desire to be remembered to Mr. John, and to all the M——s. My blessing on that dear boy! God bless him!

LETTER CCLX.

Dec. 13, 1770.

My dear Friend.—I have been offering up my thanks and praise to the loving Head of the church for bringing this matter to an happy issue. Glory be to him; his delays were not denials. He only wanted us to take it from his hands, as his gift, and therefore he laid difficulties in the way. When faith was tried, he removed them. Every thing is at last ended favourably. The presentation is sealed, and is safe in my study. Although I have been more than a little hurt by dancing attendance here and there, yet now I seem ready to do a thousand times more to oblige such dear friends. You have it in your power to reward me a thousand fold. Lay out your thanks and prayers for me and mine, and especially for my little book, which is swelled now into two volumes. It is a child of many prayers; I scarce ever sit down to write, without asking a blessing upon every line. Beg it may come out with the unction of the Spirit, and carry, wherever it goes, a sweet savour of the precious name of my Lord and my God.

I would rejoice with Mr. M——, and inform him, that he must not fail to write a short letter of thanks to my Lord C——r B——, expressing his great obligations to him for keeping the living of K—— vacant, till the Rev. Mr. S—— was provided for; acknowledging how much he is beholden to him; and desiring to

express it on all occasions. I mentioned, in my letter of yesterday, the necessity of writing to my Lord C——r S——.

My kind love to my dear brother, the vicar of K——: I wish he may lie low in the dust, as unworthy, utterly unworthy, of this great trust committed to him. But there is grace sufficient in Jesus; I wish he may live on that, and do all in his parish in a settled dependence on the assistance of the great Head of the church.

My prayer is for the family of the B——s, that this may be a favourable providence for them all; may the Miss M——s enjoy present and eternal salvation by means of it. But why do I leave out Mr. I——? Why, indeed? May his heart leap for joy at the good news out of Mr. B——'s mouth, and children yet unborn bless God for this happy event!

My dear Miss W——r will be among the foremost! Oh let him have his glory! pray let there be a public thanksgiving. If I was at K——, I would preach on the occasion, and recommend praise to a prayer-answering God. I wish you a warm Christmas, and warm hearts; I am sure they ought to be so; and may you and yours rejoice in the glad tidings of the birth of our dearest Immanuel! Continue your prayers for your servant in Jesus.

The Lord keep Mr. ——, and be his Jesus in the evening of his life, and his strength in age, and his comfort in weakness. So prays

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLXI.

Blackfriars, *Dec.* 27, 1770.

My dear Friend.—Having an opportunity of sending a line in Mr. B——'s frank, which I had out of Mr. Whitfield's study, I could not help wishing you a happy new year. Happy in Jesus; happy in growing intimacy with him. I have enjoyed a little of it, and it is, indeed, heaven upon earth. Oh for more of it at K—— in seventy-one than ever before!

Acquaint dear Mr. I——m, that, at last, with great difficulty, I have settled this affair. Christmas is a casting up time with booksellers. The whole of what I have paid is only a small sum.

Expect peace only a little while. You see, lest you should be lifted up above measure, thorns grow with roses. One, two, three trials come along with the good news of success about K——. It is not your rest. Thank God it is not. You are not at home. Get ready to go when your Father calls for you. Somebody must follow Miss B——. Who can tell, but God, whether it is you, or some of her sisters? Oh, be prepared! The door is open, step into the ark; there death cannot hurt or frighten. St. Dunstan calls—farewell. Blessings on you and yours. Thank Mr. M—— for all his kind expressions. I give them their value. Pray for yours, in Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLXII.

March 30, 1771.

My dear Friend.—Although I have but time to write a line, yet I could not longer forbear acknowledging your favour. My whole time has been employed this Lent with preaching and printing. My first volume is finished, and I hope to send you one by Mr. I——m, who is in town. The report you heard of my mother's death is true; she is gone a little before, and I shall soon follow. The goodness of God to her was very great all her life, but extraordinary to the moment of her death: so that we sorrow rejoicing. I really thank you for interesting yourself in any of my concerns. As to my usual summer journeys, one great motive has ceased; I can say nothing at this distance of time. I leave

the Lord to plan for me: and I wish to follow no will but his. Where I shall go next summer, I have not so much as a hint yet.

My kind love to your vicar. I hear good of him. The Lord bless him in all his designs for the glory of Jesus. I desire to be remembered by you in all your prayers. Every good wish I heartily offer for Mr. M——. I am vours, in Jesus,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLXIII.

Aug. 20, 1771.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—I have sent you in a parcel, directed to your brother I——, three volumes of the second part of the "Walk of Faith," as before, unbound, with one set bound for yourself, another for Miss W——r, a third for the Rev. Mr. B——: they come to K—— with many prayers. I have prayed it over in writing; and I am daily begging the free Giver of every good and perfect gift that he would go out with it, and own it to the hearts of his dear people. My design in writing the book was for his glory, and their good. The plan is simple. It was to show, that Christian principles are sufficient for all the purposes of Christian practice; so that whenever we fail in practice, we have first failed in principle. How should it be otherwise, since the principles are mighty through God? The same grace which teaches them, as the truth of God, gives also the experience of them, as the power of God. If, therefore, peace rules in the conscience and love in the heart, the effect will follow, as light does when the sun is risen. There will be a dependence on the promised power of God to do and to suffer his will; and this power will as certainly be put forth as God is true; so long as peace and love are maintained. Try yourself. Observe narrowly how it is that you fail in practice; and you will always see your faith gave way, and you were not living up to your privileges. I know not how I have succeeded in describing this grand mistake in the Christian walk, or in rectifying it: but this I know well, that the salvation of Jesus is absolutely, infinitely, everlastingly perfect in every part, and at the very given moment, and the belief of it will produce an even, holy, happy walk; and if this belief was perfect, (as it should be) an enjoyment of this salvation would be upon earth what it is in heaven. I pray God to carry you and me on from faith to faith, that we may daily bring greater honour to his word and to his work.

If any light or love, or joy, warm your heart in reading, remember me. My trials are very great. I have the old burden very heavy indeed—a vast body of sin, under which I groan, and great bodily pain, hard to bear. I have been to the sea for relief; but my Lord thinks proper to refuse it. When I had other trials he spared me, and never let me know what bodily pain was: but, now outward trials are in a great measure removed, this is my cross. He is merciful in all his dealings; blessings on him for his kind rod! You will find in the second volume a chapter on the outward cross, and another on the inward: they are the longest chapters, because I felt what I wrote, and because all God's children carry these two crosses to the grave. I beg your attention to the inward cross, and when you have read the chapter, be so good as to tell me how you like it. To manage it well, is the greatest lesson in the school of Christ. Oh that he may teach you, as you read, and be your prophet, to enable you to live upon him as your priest!

Many years ago I chose my motto—*Cease* ye from *man*. You see how needful it is. Place your happiness on any thing but the heavenly Lover, it makes itself wings and flies away. How many sweet hours (the remembrance is sweet) have I spent at K——! Yearly visits, pleasing and profitable; but I am debarred this enjoyment. I must learn my motto in an instance of hard self-denial. Happy for you and for me if every such disappointment lead us nearer to God. I beg your daily remembrance, as you are in mine. Every good wish to Miss W——r, and desire her acceptance of a bound set. My kind respects to Mr. M—— I wish Mr. J—— may walk with us in our way, and all his sisters.

I wish that little dear, dear boy does not get some of Christ's place in your heart: God bless him, and make him a comfort to you! Write my motto upon his forehead, and remember it whenever you look at him. My love to Mr. I——m. May every blessing of the everlasting covenant be yours on earth and heaven! So prays yours in Jesus,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLXIV.

Feb. 1772.

My dear friend has been thinking—"Well, I could not have expected such neglect; a letter sent in October, and not answered in January; I am surprised what can be the meaning of it!" I answer, to my shame, that I am grown very lazy, and good for nothing. It is high time I was dismissed from the vineyard; and any other master but mine would have had nothing to do with me long ago. I cannot but loathe myself, and stand wondering daily at his kindness. Never was self lower, and his loveliness higher, than in this new year. Worthless as I am, beyond all conception, yet he begun the year with vouchsafing me some delightful Pisgah views. You must know it has been a custom with me for many years to have a sermon on the New Year's Day, and to have the text of a sort of watch-word, something very short and striking, and which may serve the believers to feast upon a twelvemonth. I have found this very useful to myself, and so have others. Our text for 1772 was, "Christ is all." I send you some remarks, believing you will have fellowship with us in them, as you certainly have in that adorable person of whom they treat.

Christ has all the fulness of salvation in him, as God-man; and he has it to the glory of the Father, and of the eternal Spirit: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, as in the head for the use of his members. And it pleased the Holy Spirit to testify of his fulness in the scripture; and it pleases him by his grace to bring believers to use it, and to live upon it; and then they are truly converted. All other experience is not worth one farthing. The great work of the Holy Ghost is to pull down *self*, and to exalt *Christ*. This he does effectually, and this he has done in you. Think what your debt is; try to cast it up; and send me the sum total. Say, how much do you owe to the Holy Spirit for enlightening your understanding, and convincing you that Christ is the one sun of the spiritual world. What a most blessed change has he wrought upon your mind! He has stripped you of the knowledge that puffeth up; and has sent you to Christ, and to none but Christ, to be taught the things of God. He has brought you humbled to the Saviour's feet, where you are sitting among his lowest scholars (and that is the best place) to hear his words. Thus he has glorified your divine Prophet in you; and in the matter of teaching he has made Christ your *all*. The Bible, and ministers, and means, have now got their right place; they are subservient to Christ's teaching. He is exalted by your use of them: for you do not go to them, but to *him* in them, to receive lesson upon lesson, and line upon line. Thus may you and I be found waiting upon our great Lord and Master through the year seventy-two. And when we thus put honour upon his office, and give glory to his teaching, we may expect to learn much of him: he will guide our feet in the way of peace; he will enlarge our faculties to know more of the wonders of his grace; and he will enable us to enjoy more of the heavenly sweetness of his precious love. Yes, Lord, we have great expectations from thee: thou canst teach us far more than we have yet learned. Oh make us every day humbler scholars, that, whatever we learn, the praise of it may be thine, and our growth in saving knowledge may add to thy fame and renown!

Methinks I hear you ask, "But how shall I know for certain that I am one of Christ's scholars, and that he has indeed taken me into his tuition and teaching?" My dear madam, you are to know it from what you have learned of him. You cannot be certain of it any other way. He would have you to look at his revealed truth, and to try yourself by it. Has he not made you wise in it unto

salvation? Oh do, pray do, acknowledge what he has done for your soul. When you were sensible of your fallen state, in which you inherit a corrupt nature, and felt that in it you could do nothing but sin; when guilt was in your conscience, and fear was in your heart, what was it which brought you relief? To what did you look for pardon, and from whence did you expect peace with God? Your answer will show whether you are Christ's scholar, and how far you have advanced in his school.

I can make you reply (for I have heard you say as much), "Why, to be sure, I have no hope but in that offering *which perfecteth for ever*, and in that righteousness which justifieth from all things. This is my salvation—this, and nothing else—*Christ is all:* I expect no pardon but in his blood; no justification but in his obedience; no safety but in his keeping me; no happiness but in his love; no heaven but in the enjoyment of Immanuel."

Very well! this is a good confession. But who taught it you? Was it not Jesus, he who alone teacheth man saving knowledge? Has not he opened your eyes to see, and your heart to receive those most blessed truths? Yes, he has. And do you praise him as he deserves? Oh no. A thought often comes into your head, "If I had learned those things of Christ, how could it be that I am so little and so seldom comforted by them? They are full of all consolation, and I am sometimes quite empty: how can this be?" I will tell you, my good friend. The very same thought comes into my head, and plagues me. But I get the better of it. Consider where it is written, "He that is comforted shall be saved!" You are called upon to trust the work of Christ, and to trust it for yourself upon the word of Christ. His work is your whole salvation; his word, and nothing in yourself. (Here I should stop. This is the end of my paper But I cannot get done; you must let me finish my sentence, although it be to your cost. Well, you will forgive me, I procced.) His word, and nothing in yourself, is to be your lawful warrant to call this salvation your own, and to use it for your own. Rest here, giving credit to the free promise of salvation to all that will receive it, and I will lay my life of it you will not want comfort long. You will have God's faithfulness for your security that you are a saved sinner; and the belief of this cannot but bring peace and joy into your heart. According to your faith, so will your comfort be. But if you rest not here, get comfort where you will, it will not be true; it cannot be lasting. Not *true;* because all comfort dwells in Christ; every thing else is emptiness and vanity. Not *lasting;* because frames, feelings, habits, graces, joys, &c. &c. ebb and flow. Only Christ abideth the same for ever, and only his unchangeable word can fix your comfort. Trust it; make it your constant warrant to go to Christ for comfort, and he cannot deny his word: according to your faith, so will he give unto you.

Do not think, my good friend, I would have you to walk mourning and melancholy. No. There is nothing in Christ to make you so. He is all light, and life, and love, and joy, and that without ceasing; an infinite and everlasting fulness of all blessings. I would lead you to him in the direct road, which is to lead you out of self entirely. Christ is the way: look more at him, and less at self; trust more to him, and less to your faith or comforts; live upon nothing in yourself, but live every moment upon him; do not eye his gifts so much; fix your heart upon the Giver; be always thinking of his fulness whenever you feel your own emptiness: whatever you are, or do, or suffer, let all things bring you to make (forgive me, I must go on: I take up another half-sheet, and I beseech you, again and again, let all things bring you to make) use of Christ. Read about him. Go to your closet to converse with him. Go to church to meet him. Make him your companion. Accustom your mind to meditate upon him Pray without ceasing to him as your bosom friend. Do not be shy of him; he hates shyness. Draw near; he bids you come with *boldness*, vile, unthankful, unprofitable, as you are: his dear heart is always open to hear your complaints, and to relieve your distresses, be they what they will. Remember, he is the Sun of *our* world, and you cannot be thus always in his presence without being enlightened by his rays, and cherished with his warm beams. When any are very cold within doors, and see the sun shining sweetly, they do not use to ask, "Is it *my* sun? May I go out to walk in this noon-day brightness, and get

myself warm in this delightful sunshine? Is it for me?" Yes, make use of it, who will; it shines for you; Christ is as freely yours as that sunshine. You may walk in his light, and enjoy his comforts. You may take him for your righteousness, and your holiness; you may live on him for grace and glory. He is yours, and all he has is yours also, and for your use, to-day and for ever.

Thus you see, my good friend, how we intend to live in London through the year 1772. *Christ is our all*, not only in our title to salvation, but also in our present enjoyment of its blessings.—We expect a great income, and all from Christ. Our faith in him is not an empty notion (as the world thinks), but it is a reality. Christ is the substance; all besides is shadow; and by faith we now take possession of the substance. We live by him, and we live on him. We need envy nobody. What are princes to us? our estate is vastly beyond theirs; the inheritance is sure; the riches unsearchable; and the income—*ask and have;* and that increasing through eternity. Oh blessed, most blessed, inheritance! The prospect is not like that of Moses. He only saw the country, but we go over Jordan. We, who have believed, do enter into rest. We are living in the land which floweth with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands. An heir of this country may live in the poorest cottage at K——, and yet be richer than a king. If he live this year, as he should do, by the faith of the Son of God, what are the riches of emperors compared to his? He can look into his title-deeds, and there read two clauses, which make him rich, even beyond conception: "All things are yours—and yours for ever."

I know what you will think, as well as if I heard you tell me your thoughts. I am acquainted with the vile suggestions of the enemy. He may tempt you to doubt of these truths on account of your having still so many wants. But, my friend, the more the better. We should glory in our wants. They make us rich: for we can want nothing but it is in Christ's fulness, and laid up there for us. This makes way for a constant intercourse between you and Christ, and keeps up a holy friendship in giving and receiving. By this means a sweet familiarity will be maintained, and a growing intimacy cherished. Christ requires you would be free with him, and draw largely upon his bank. Every moment you want something, Christ says, "Here it is; come to me for it. I can deny you nothing." Oh go to him at his bidding, and put honour upon his love. Your many, your great wants, will only give him an occasion to show how much he loveth you. He has for you bowels of the tenderest compassion. He feels for you more than you can think. Blessed is that want, look at it by faith and you will find it so, which brings you to Christ for a supply.

"Do you want *Temporals*, read my grant, Matt. vi. 32; or *Spirituals*, trust my promise, Eph. i. 3; or *Eternals*, look at my gift in Rom. vi. 23; and be assured I will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good." Stand upon this ground, and here survey your wants; be they what they will, trust Christ for a supply. Live like a Christian, by the faith of the Son of God, for temporals, spirituals, and eternals: this is living. This is *holy* living; for you cannot be thus receiving every moment out of Christ's fulness, but you must feel some gratitude to your divine friend, and a growing willingness to be his debtor for grace, and to be one of his pensioners for glory. This is *high* living; for then has the Holy Spirit magnified Jesus in you upon earth, when you make him *all* and in *all;* and then he has given you the certain earnest that he will bring you to heaven, where you will find Jesus *all*, and in *all*, for ever and ever.

This is a little touch of our new year's gift. Pray tell Miss W——r it is our standing dish for 1772: I wish her a good stomach to feast on it with us; it is food and physic: I know she likes it. I do not doubt but in a very little time she and I shall sit down at the King's own table, and feast with him, and on him, and bless him, as long as we have our being. Pray tell them at next door, *Christ is all.* And tell my dear little vicar, to whom my heart is knit, to exalt Christ. Up with him, Mr. B——; come, try; up with him a little higher. Pray, and preach, and live: that Christ be exalted. God bless the lifting up of Christ in K—— pulpit! *Amen.*

There is nothing I wish myself of good, but I wish it to Mr. M——. I really love my K—— friends, and often think of that precious child. Oh Lord, keep

him! Jesus, save him! may death never part mother and son. I wish my prayers may be heard for him. His portion with us is worth a thousand K——s. May he find with us Christ his *all!*

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLXV.

BLACKFRIARS, *May* 6, 1772.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—Indeed you serve me right: it is good to settle an even account with me. I was so many months in writing; so will you be, to a day. This is rather a too hard and strict way of learning me to write oftener. I could have wished you to write again and again, and to set me an example of what I ought to do. But I submit to your judgment, and stand corrected in your way.

Hearing of Mr. I——n's coming to town, I did think of some little note; such as, "We are much hurried; time taken up greatly; so many interruptions, that when I have proposed to sit down to ask my good friend how he does, I am called away."

Nothing came, however; I am resolved to grow better. My acquaintance are still much upon my mind and heart. Distance of time and place have made no change. I love them in the Lord, and for the Lord's sake, Oh, he is kind to you. How many singular blessings have you! How highly favoured in *temporals!* Try to number them, if you can. How most highly favoured in *spirituals*, which are inestimable and eternal blessings! I feel thankfulness for you, and pray for the continuance of all your mercies, with a growing sense of your unworthiness of the least of them. Mr. I——n presses me much to say that I will come into the north this summer; but I cannot answer him directly. If I do, it will not be without spending some time at your house. He gives me a good account of Miss W——r, to whom I desire to be remembered, with my best wishes. All manner of blessings rest upon Mr. M——: may the Lord take that Isaac of yours in his arms, and lay his hands on him and bless him. Good success to my friend the vicar: tell him the king has appointed Mr. I. S. a prebendary of W——r. The hearts of kings are in the hands of our Jesus: if he be ours he will make all things ours. Remember in your prayers a friend to you and K——,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLXVI.

Nov. 23, 1773.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—As I have not been permitted to talk to you face to face this summer, why should not I converse with you in another way? I think it right to tell you my present feelings, and how I stand affected towards you. I believe that all the true love in the world comes from the infinite fulness of Jesus. It has no other source: and he has (eternal blessings on him!) warmed my cold heart with some of his precious love. I feel a ray of it drawing my affections to my dear friend. Its sweet influence is from above: its origin is divine: it is indeed of heavenly extraction and birth. No thanks to me that it partakes of some of the gracious properties of the fountain from whence it springs: for some of them it has, my conscience bearing me witness. And these, I confess, are not natives of mine own soil; not being planted in it, am I able to make them grow and flourish? Oh no! The God of all grace is the free giver: he is the mighty continuer: without him they would have never been; without him they would have died at their birth, and gone out like a spark in the ocean. But I do really find some of the image and likeness of my loving Lord upon my heart, and that towards you. There can be no true friendship without an union of spirit. In order to be pure and steadfast, it must be refined from selfish views and carnal

motives: it must spring from no outward attachment, but from a real agreement and harmony of soul: such is the nature of Christian friendship. It is beyond all Plato's rules and Seneca's morals. They had no idea of it. Reason, the most refined, could never understand our doctrine. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; a most wonderful union; big with blessings, temporal and eternal. Among its temporal blessings, it is not the least that he reforms the heart and makes it loving like his own; capable of receiving his heavenly friendship, and capable of showing it to his praise by especial love to his brethren and our brethren.

In whatever view I am considering our divine friend, there is always something which gives him, and most justly, the pre-eminence. He is, and will be for ever, the most blessed head, which communicates life, and breath, and all things, to every member. In the character now before us, oh how exalted, how glorious is he! Yes, he is beyond all blessing and praise, for being a present Saviour to his people; as he mightily delivers them from the tyranny of their vile tempers, and renders them happy in one another. It is from his grace that they put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, &c. He plants those virtues in the heart; he waters them with the rain of heaven; he shines upon them; and he makes them flourish in spite of all the opposition of selfish passions and inbred lusts; indeed he does. There are persons in the world who are infinitely indebted to Jesus Christ for that brotherly love which is the bond of perfectness, and who, in some measure, walk in love, according to his teaching. But they mourn, I know they do, because they find so little gratitude to him, and so little conformity to his example. Yet some likeness there is, and they are striving every day for more, still setting out afresh: not content with any past attainment, they study both to love him more, and to draw more virtue from him, that they may love others, as Christ also loved them.

Methinks I see one of his disciples warm and eager in this pursuit. I stop him, and ask, "Sir, upon what principle is it that your heart is so set upon being like Christ? You are quite unwearied in having your own hateful tempers subdued, and in putting on the sweet dispositions of the meek and lowly Jesus."

His answer, I am sure, would be, "The love of Christ constraineth me: Oh, how I feel the blessed effect of being one with my Lord! He has taught me in my very heart to love God, and man for God's sake · to this dearest Jesus I am indebted for my paradise restored; and I am never happier than when I am sensible of my vast debt; for then I love him best, and am most enabled to manifest it to men. Beyond description, beyond conception of any, yea, all the glorified saints, is the love of Immanuel to my soul: it is, like himself, infinite and boundless; it is quite free, given to the unworthiest and to the most unthankful; a perfect love, nothing but love, such as excludes all shyness and coldness, prevents misconstructions and quarrels, yea, removes the very cause and ground of them. A communicative love, most generously bestowing a right and title to all blessings upon the beloved; for thus the grant of the great charter runs; 'all mine are thine;' and, to crown the whole, it is a lasting love, yea, everlasting, reaching from eternity to eternity. The more I study and experience of this heavenly love, the more I find my heart affected with it, and the more I wish that all my friendships may reflect some image of, and bring some glory to, the friendship of my Jesus."

Having read this passage over carefully, I can, if called upon, set my hand and seal to it. "All this I know to be true. W. R." Some little spark of this holy flame (but, though little, inestimable,) has long ago thawed my frozen heart, and has kept a warmth of affection in it, which he that kindled often hears of, in prayer and praise for you, and of which they who know you, and come in my way, hear also. Some kind providence will, I doubt not, ere long, let you hear it with your own ears. With pleasing hope I look forward to a present, because I am sure of a future meeting, which will never end. Our friendship will run coeval with our being: it is an union formed by the divine hand of Jesus, who has won our hearts, and made them one in himself, in a bond which he will not,

and none else can, break: so that we may sing, in humble confidence, all our way to Zion,

The love divine
That made us thine,
Shall keep us thine for ever.

Tell Mr. B—— he is in my debt, and I wish him to get out of it; but he must pray a good deal for me before he does; so must you. Pray the more for me. Ply the throne. Mrs. Romaine joins in all.

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLXVII

Grace and peace be abundantly multiplied to my dear friend from the Lord Christ; may all whom she loves partake of his love! I have been kept from writing to you, and acknowledging your many favours to me and to mine, by my Master's business. As soon as I came home, I was invited to preach in Buckinghamshire, where we have had the Lord with us of a truth. Oh, what am I, that mine eyes should see such things as I see? I, who am the veriest filthy dunghill sinner that ever God suffered to live; that I, even I, should partake of his grace, as well as preach it. Oh, it is astonishing! Surely, if ever I get to heaven (and I must not doubt of getting thither) I shall beat Mary Magdalen, and Paul, and Peter, and Manassch, all to nothing. They had not half to pardon that I have; and yet, glory, glory, glory be to Jesus, I am among his pardoned ones. Who, then, shall sing his praises in such a high note as I can? None, no, not one of them all. I am the most indebted to free grace of all that ever were saved out of hell. May my experience tend to the strengthening of your faith!

Dear madam, you almost overcome me with kindness. I shall be afraid to call and see you, lest you make me proud; for what have I good in me? Nothing. What good do I? None at all. Whatever good is in man, whatever good is done upon earth, the Lord doeth it himself. Down, then, with man: lay low his lofty looks, and up with Christ. Exalt him—too high we cannot raise *him*, too low we cannot humble the *sinner*. I would have you, therefore, not to look at me, but at my precious, dear Master. Look unto him, and you shall be saved. Look unto me for any thing, and you shall infallibly be disappointed.

Present my hearty love in the bowels of Christ Jesus to your sister W———r. I find great fellowship with her as a member of the same body, and actuated by the same Spirit: and tell her from me, that "she cannot make too much use of Christ." The more she uses him in all things, the happier will she be. To this I can set my seal; *Probatum est.*

I fail not to remember Mr. M——, when I am near, and have freedom with my precious Master. May you never want his presence! My wife joins in thanks, and is, with me, yours in the Lord Jesus,

W. Romaine

LETTER CCLXVIII.

Oct. 28, 1775.

My good Friend.—Having an opportunity of sending my hearty love to you by Mr. I——n, I could not avoid embracing it. You are often on my mind, and in my prayers. Really, my dear madam, you are one of them by whom I find the truth of what I believe concerning the communion of saints. I experience it in its comfort; for I feel with you, rejoicing in your joys, and taking part in your sorrows. I have a good account of your health, a great blessing (may it continue) and of your spiritual health, which is a greater; may that

increase! and it will, as you live more *in*, *on*, and *to* Christ Jesus: coming daily as a poor sinner to live on a rich Saviour. This is the great secret of the gospel. Nothing should keep you from Christ. However you feel, whatever you have done, at all times, in all places and frames, go to Jesus. I have been at this lesson a great while, and though very dull and stupid, yet, through marvellous grace, I have learned something. When things go well, we are apt to rest in them: I do not. My Jesus makes them well; I thank him, and rest in him, and not in his gifts: I enjoy him in them; and when things go badly, inward or outward, I would not stay from him to complain or murmur one moment, but rejecting myself entirely, take him for my whole complete happiness. Let things go as they will, I look at Jesus through them, and would make use of them to lead me to live more upon him. This seems easy; but try it. I wish you a better scholar at it than I am. I hear you had a warning to be ready at the next door. I pray for its good effect. When the messenger comes, may every M—— lift up his and her head with joy!

I grow old, and find marks of the tabernacle's wearing out fast; but I know in whom I have believed. To him I commend you and yours. Mrs. R. joins in every good wish to all yours and you. Do not fail to pray for

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLXIX.

Blackfriars, *June* 24, 1777.

My very good Friend.—Our journey is settled for Thursday morning next; we move slowly. Hope to be with you on Saturday, perhaps to dinner. Will you desire Mr. B—— to give me leave to speak to his people, Sunday morning. I shall take it as a favour. I have seen poor D——: he is a very great penitent. The Lord has brought him through the fire, a miracle of mercy. Before this reach you, it is likely he will be adoring the love of a triune God. My journey has been with much prayer. He that makes men to be of one mind in a house, will, I hope, unite us to himself by his loving Spirit, and render us useful to each other, as iron sharpeneth iron. I do not, I cannot forget your family, Mr. M——, and your beloved Isaac. I often have them on my mind. I am, with great respect, in our common Lord, yours,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLXX.

Aug. 2, 1779.

My dear Friend.—We remembered you and yours very particularly on the 7th of May last. Blessings on the birth of that day! I know more about it in 79 than I did before; and more reason to honour and esteem you. I send you inclosed a little token of respect. You had it in the last war, and it is now again expedient, yea, necessary. I hope for your helping hand in this good work. Some must fight, and others must pray. One is as much wanted as the other. If Moses does not pray, Joshua does not conquer. Prayers gained the victory. Asa has a great army of one million one hundred thousand good soldiers; but he does not trust so much to them, nor conquer so much by them, as by his prayers. Jehoshaphat's prayer of faith vanquished a vast host without fighting Read 1 Chron. v. from the 18th to the 23rd verse. On this account I beg of you, my dear friend, to join us. You have some praying people at K——: call upon them to unite on this occasion. Remember, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," Jam. v. To day it will avail as much as it did in the time of Elias. May God give you the spirit of prayer, that you may join the goodly company throughout the land, who will be on their knees next Sunday at eight o'clock. It is your duty. May you esteem it your privilege! and I wish

you growing communion with your God; more delight daily in approaching the throne of his grace, and more blessings coming from him on you and yours. We have already many hands lifted up to engage the Lord of Hosts on our side. Mine are engaged, and I trust will not hang down till peace return.

Mrs. Romaine is with me, and well. With her and my best wishes, I am, in our dear Lord, your friend and obliged servant,

W. ROMAINE.

LETTER CCLXXI.

BLACKFRIARS, *Nov.* 30, 1779.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—I have been taught to weep with them that weep. They cannot but feel with and for one another, who are joined to the Lord in one Spirit. That you suffer seems grievous to the flesh. I sympathize with you; but I also find the Lord is with you, supports you, yea, he comforts you: therein I do rejoice. My prayer is for much patience under his hand, and much profit from his rod. Let me direct your attention to Heb. xii. from the 5th verse to the 14th. The whole matter turns upon the character of the Person who afflicts. Is it in wrath or in love? Does he punish as a judge, or correct as a father? Mind how the sentence begins—*my son;* keep this upon your heart; you have fled to Jesus, you have taken the benefit of his atonement and of his righteousness; you are therefore the adopted child of the most high God. And you must not think he changes his love when he changes his dispensations. He is always your Father; and say, his rod is for the present not joyous, but grievous; yet mind, ver. 11, it only seemeth: the flesh seems to be hurt, but really it is not; it is only in appearance; look nearer; you may easily see love sending, love inflicting; and wait a little, you will have reason to thank your Father for the blessed fruits of his love. If you live, you will find them very rich and ripe. If he spare life, my first journey shall be to K——. I have great fellowship with the afflicted. I shall hope and pray for your support and comforts; my God has promised both. May they be abundant! This summer has given me great occasion to learn the same lesson with you; and I can set to my seal that God is good, and doeth good, nothing but good, to his children: to his tender care I commend you and yours. Look above, live above, both your joys and sorrows; make Jesus, at least you wish to make Jesus, your ALL. I shall be thankful for a line when convenient, to tell me more of his dealings with you; and am, in him, your faithful dear friend and servant,

W. ROMAINE

LETTER CCLXXII.

Saturday, March 29.

MY GOOD FRIEND.—I have an opportunity of sending my respects to you by Mr. I——n: but I chose to give them to you under mine own hand Although I do not see you, yet you have a place in my heart, and in and for the Lord's sake, who changeth not. I remember K—— in my best times, you and yours. One proof of it I hope to give this summer, if I am spared. Age is coming on fast; infirmities many and great; travelling is a burden. But before I go hence, I purpose once more to visit my Y——re friends; I feel towards them some of that grace mentioned Rom. i. 11, 12, which grows by giving and receiving; as, indeed, all the gifts of Christ do: the more you use, the more you have: you become richer for what you lay out. Such a wonderful fulness flows from Christ, that he who spends most for him, gets most from him. Oh that my journey may be of this kind: to your profit and mine, and to Christ's glory! I know not what time it will be; but will not wait on you without first acquainting you, and knowing what time will be to you the most agreeable.

Your dear boy is often on my mind. I am sure you do not wish him better than I do. All my advice is turned into prayer. You will give my love to Mr. B——y, of whom I hear good things. Mrs. R. desires her kind love to you and family. We had yesterday such a solemn time as I never expected to see in London. It was very truly a good Friday. My hopes revive for this guilty land; for, them that honour me, says God, I will honour: I am sure he was honoured yesterday. Let me, my good friend, not in compliment I ask, be remembered by you in prayer. My time is short. Pray that I may be kept humble and thankful. I am, with true Christian affection, in and for my dear Lord's sake, your friend and servant,

W. Romaine.

LETTER CCLXXIII.

Nov. 16, 1780.

My dear Friend.—Wave after wave—trouble after trouble—no ceasing till we get into the haven. I do not wish you out of them, but to profit by them. The furnace is to refine gold; so faith; proved, improved, yea, perfected by trials. Mind what the great Refiner says—"I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." O blessed furnace!—What! is this the effect of being put into it? does the Son of God appear for and with his suffering members?—Does he keep off the evil of suffering—give patience under it, profit from it—deaden the life of sense—quicken the life of faith—and thus bring more real good to his people from their trials than from all the comforts that ever they had? Say—It is great, an uncommon great trial: the furnace is heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated Still, this is not to destroy faith, but to refine and exalt it. The plain lesson from hence to be learnt is, we must now trust more to the Lord, and less to self. His strength must be our safety, and not our weakness. His blessings must be our happiness. I write these things, because I am praying for them. It is not so much advice as prayer. I know my Lord can, I believe my Lord will, help you in this time of need. Whatever interest I have with him is yours. None feel for you, or can more than I do.

I am thankful, however, for the grace of God given unto you at this trying time. The furnace is intended, in the Father's hand, to prove faith, and to improve it. He puts it into the fire like gold, that, upon trial, it may appear sterling; and that, losing nothing but dross, we may learn to trust him better. You now see and know that his trials of faith are acts of love. The burning bush, so far from being consumed in the flames, is cherished by them, and grows. Blessed be the name of our God! I find the miracle repeated in our visitations. In faith and patience you possess your soul; yea, the smell of fire does not pass upon you. Where could you have learnt what God has been teaching you so soon, or so well? All is well. May you see more of his love in every dispensation! Trust him. Go on trusting, without doubt or wavering, and he will grant you your heart's desire. I commend myself very earnestly to your remembrance in the best place. Mention me to your divine and almighty Friend, in whom I am, with my very best wishes, your obliged servant,

W. Romaine.

P. S. Our text to-morrow is—"We are the true circumcision," &c. Phil. iii. 3. God fulfil it, and give us this communion with the Trinity!

LETTER CCLXXIV.

May 16, 1782.

My very dear Friend.—I could not neglect this opportunity of assuring you how much I remember you in the best place. Our Lord knows the *needs must* of suffering. He loves you too well to deprive you of your portion. He himself went, and all his go, the same way to glory. They drink of the brook in the way; and they drink it out of the cup of salvation. True, it is bitter. I find it very bitter; as unpalatable as you can find it. But I am praying it may prove more salutary to you and to me; and this it cannot do while we murmur and complain. It is sent to stop this working of self-will. The flesh is impatient, and frets; the spirit stops its rebellion, and says—Not my will, Lord, but thine be done. Amen! May this be the end of all your trials! May you come out of them like gold out of the fire.

I hear you have a present exercise; viz. your young and beloved Isaac to be parted from you. There is grace sufficient even for this. You do not love your son more than I did mine; it cannot cross your will more than it did mine: but my son went into the army, and I do not repent; it was his choice. He has been kept, as far as I know, from army-sins; and the same good God may also keep your son. Trust him in his loving and careful guidance; and the Lord will do what is best both for him and for you.

——— Your one business is to trust your *all* in the hands of Christ; having received him, then to live upon him. Remember, he is to answer *every* purpose, body and soul; you and yours; earth and heaven. You are not living up to your privilege, if there be any person or thing that you keep back from Christ, and do not leave to his absolute management. The command runs—"Trust in *him* at all times, ye people." Pray him to make you willing to part with your son, as he did Abraham. Pray him to give you more faith to trust him in the Lord's hand: and then follow him with your daily prayers that the good Lord may keep him from all evil. When you have done this, the rest must be left. The Lord will do what seemeth him good: yea, he will enable you to say, Come what may, *all* is well.

In a bond never to be broken, I am yours in Christ. My blessing on your dear son, and prayers for him!

W. Romaine.

THE DIVINE LEGATION OF MOSES

DEMONSTRATED FROM HIS HAVING MADE EXPRESS MENTION OF, AND INSISTED SO MUCH ON, THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE: WHEREBY MR. WARBURTON'S ATTEMPT TO DEMONSTRATE THE DIVINE LEGATION OF MOSES FROM HIS OMISSION OF A FUTURE STATE IS PROVED TO BE ABSURD AND DESTRUCTIVE OF ALL REVELATION.

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, AT ST. MARY'S, MARCH 4, 1739.

The foundations of all religion lie in two things; that there is a God who rules the world, and that the souls of men are capable of subsisting after death: for he that comes unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him; so that if these things be not supposed as most agreeable to human reason, we cannot imagine upon what grounds mankind should embrace any way of religion at all.—*Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ*, b. 3, ch. 1, sect. 1

And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven. And as touching the dead that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.—Mark xii. 24, 25, 26, 27.

The New Testament is full of passages in which it is asserted, that Moses hath directly treated of the state in which man was at first created;—of the laws which his Creator gave him;—of his violation of those laws;—and of his forfeiting thereby life here, and happiness hereafter;—of the method of his being restored and again enabled to attain that happiness;—and of his having instituted many types and figures expressive of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of that person who was to restore man to happiness. Though these truths frequently occur in the New Testament, yet many persons have been at a loss where to find them in Moses' writings; and there hath not been a more common and popular objection against them, than what hath been drawn from hence, *viz.* "That the Deity could have no other end in the creation but to communicate happiness, that therefore, whenever he reveals his will to his creatures, this revelation ought to contain some means to attain happiness: because if it doth not in fact promote the happiness of his creatures, then it must either be made in vain, or to promote misery, both which are ends unworthy of the Deity, and inconsistent with his moral perfections. But the law by Moses doth not contain any means to promote the happiness of God's creatures: because there is no mention made in it of that happiness for which man was created: and because man could not answer the end of his creation, if he was ignorant of that end. The law therefore by Moses could not be a revelation from God; for God never acts in vain, and could never be the author of misery in keeping men ignorant of that great truth, which it was of the utmost importance to their happiness to be acquainted with."

It cannot be concealed, that the answers hitherto made, have given little satisfaction to the objectors. A late performance indeed promised to clear up this point, and to demonstrate the divine legation of Moses from his omission of a future state, even upon the very principles of those who rejected his authority. But this design can never answer the end, but must rather promote that very cause which it pretends to overthrow: because it strengthens and confirms the objection, and because the very foundation upon which it is built is weak and false: for it is a matter of fact, that a future state is mentioned in Moses' writings, and is so far from not being to be found there, that it makes, if not the whole, yet a very great part of those writings, it being delivered there in such plain, literal terms, that he who can barely read, may read and find it there. To those modern Sadducees who will not see it there, one may safely say upon Christ's authority in the text, what he said upon the very same occasion, "Do ye not therefore err because ye know not the scriptures," (and therefore if they had known the scriptures, they would not have erred, so that the doctrine they deny, must be contained in the scriptures) "neither the power of God:" "for have ye not read in the book of Moses," (in that part of the scriptures in particular,) "how in the bush God spake unto him saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" (their God after they had departed this life, and therefore they existed in a future state, because) "he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; ye therefore do greatly err." If we may take it for granted that our Saviour hath here made a just inference; then Moses will be found not only to teach a future state, but a resurrection also of the body. "And as touching the dead," says Christ, "that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham?" Now if saying the Lord was God of Abraham, was saying that Abraham was to rise from the dead, it follows that the Jews, if they understood their own language when Moses wrote, must have known that this doctrine was taught in his writings. And if calling the Lord the God of Abraham proves his resurrection, then calling him the God of the Israelites must prove theirs: so that they must have known that they also were to rise from the dead. This conclusion cannot but be just, because Christ hath made it: and they who allow it to be just, must own that there are numerous arguments in the Pentateuch for the doctrine of a future state.

I might here show wherein the justness of our Saviour's inference consists, but that will be more properly considered in another place; however, it must be sufficient to a Christian audience, and if Christ hath said that a future state is to be found in Moses, I am satisfied every one here present will conclude that it actually is there.

But our adversaries require other proofs: their ignorance hinders them from seeing wherein the force of our argument lies, so that they are not convinced by it; but send us to Moses himself, and desire we would show them some plain texts in his writings, where a future state is expressly mentioned.

"As it was the doctrine of the reformation, and is still of the Church of England in her articles and homilies, that Moses hath treated of a future state:—as this is a subject that will give us an opportunity of clearing up the design of some part of Moses' writings:—as truth, the glory of God, the honour of Moses, and the revelation by him are concerned in this inquiry:—and as we must be forced to give up Christianity, if we cannot show where a future state is mentioned in the law, because it is all throughout the New Testament said to be there; so are we forbid by these reasons to be unconcerned in this point; they call upon us to use our utmost diligence, and require the most careful study of every Christian to find out the places where it is directly mentioned, and to give light to those where it is taken for granted and hinted at."

It would be needless to prove that there shall be a future state. This others, assisted by revelation, have sufficiently done. It will abundantly answer our purpose and fully convince every reasonable man, if we can prove the truth of these three propositions.

First, That if the doctrine of a future state could not be directly found in the

law of Moses, yet there are many strong and unanswerable arguments, which suppose that it is, and prove that it ought to be there.

Secondly, That the doctrine of a future state actually is to be found in, and doth make a very great part of, the writings of Moses, the obligation to observe every law, rite, and ceremony, being enforced upon the sanctions of future rewards and punishments.

Thirdly, That therefore the divine legation of Moses may be truly and properly demonstrated upon these principles.

If these propositions could be fairly proved, there would be no room to impeach the moral perfections of God, or to accuse Moses of imposture. The very supposition upon which these accusations are grounded would appear false and absurd: and it would be seen, that they, who could not find the doctrine of a future state in the writings of Moses, did not understand those writings: that he, who pretended to give some reasons why Moses did not mention a future state, could neither do Moses nor religion any service by such a false representation of the case: and that they who believe this to be the case, are either enemies to Moses or to truth; though in the point before us he must be an enemy to both, who is so to either of them.

There will appear reason enough for these and many more such like observations when it is proved.

First, That if the doctrine of a future state could not be directly found in the law of Moses, yet there are many strong and unanswerable arguments, which suppose that it is, and prove that it ought to be there.

This will appear from arguments drawn from reason or the nature of the thing, and from the scriptures of the New Testament. And, first, from the reason of the thing. A future state ought to make part of the law, because, upon the supposition, that God intended man for happiness, it is inconsistent with his attributes to make a revelation of his will, and to omit such a doctrine in it. God hath all perfections originally in himself; among the rest infinite wisdom, because that is a perfection: as, therefore, he must know the value of every thing, both as omniscient, and as he made every thing, it follows that he can never form a wrong judgment, and being also infinitely good, can never prefer a lesser good to a greater. for nothing can appear to us with greater certainty, than, that he who hath all perfections, cannot be imperfect; or, that he who is omniscient, cannot but know, that eternal happiness is a much greater good than temporal; or that he who is infinitely good, cannot but be concerned to promote this greater good in opposition to the less. So that the supposition of the revelation by Moses coming from God, and yet omitting a future state, hath these manifest absurdities chained to it, that God must either not have seen the Jews' greater good, their eternal welfare, or if he did see it, could not have been concerned to promote it,* *i. e.* he is either not infinitely wise, or not infinitely good; both which are infinite contradictions. And, therefore, if eternal happiness be a much greater good than temporal, and if the Deity be infinitely wise and good, and, of course, must know and prefer this greater good in opposition to the lesser, it is almost a demonstration, that, whenever God reveals his will to his creatures, he must act consistently with those attributes, and that therefore the revelation by Moses ought almost entirely to treat of—however, to contain something concerning—a future state. If God indeed could promote the Jews' eternal happiness more effectually by keeping them ignorant of it, then this argument would not be conclusive; but this, it will soon appear, he neither could nor did intend to do.

Secondly, But farther God actually did see this greater good and did promote it, because he gave man freedom of will. For what was the intention of the Deity in creating man? Was it not to make him a free agent? To give him certain laws? To place him in a state of trial, where he was to give proof of the right use of his free agency by observing those laws, and after a sufficient time of probation to admit him to his favour and endless happiness? That this was the original intention will be readily allowed by most persons. Was man then created

* Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ, 153, l. 21.

for such ends, and was not he to know the end of his creation? If he did not know it, how could he answer it? Being ignorant of the end for which he was created, it was impossible he could know the true reason why those laws were given him, which were designed to answer that end. So that he could not have any reason to follow those laws which were the right means to attain the end, if he knew not that there was any end, or that the means tended not to it; because if he was ignorant of the true intention of the laws, no motive could be drawn from hence to enforce his observance of them, and because it is a contradiction to assert, that a reasonable being acts without some motives, or evidence, *i. e.* without a reason; and it must cease to be reasonable, when it acts where it hath no end in view, or where it proposes nothing by acting: for there can be nothing to determine a reasonable being to perform any action, which he cannot discover hath any consequences, or what he cannot propose any end in doing, *i. e.* what he hath no reason to determine him to do. Man then being a free agent, could not be treated as such, unless he knew the end, that he night judge whether it was worthy of his choice, and would be a sufficient over-balance to the disadvantages which attended the practice of the means.* As he was to choose for himself, the case ought to have been fairly and fully stated to him: but what room was there to choose, if he was suffered to know only one side of the case, and yet it was expected of him, that he should determine upon both, and in favour of that side for which no evidence appeared; than which nothing can be more absurd and impossible. These things then being neither known nor offered to man's choice, man was made a free agent, and yet had no opportunity of giving any proofs of the right use of his free agency, in that point for which only he was made a free agent. To affirm therefore, that there is no mention of a future state in the revelation by Moses, is upon these accounts absurd, *viz.* That it supposes God created man a free agent for certain ends, and yet that he was not concerned to promote those ends, or to let man know that there was any end at all; and that he who made man did not know that he made him a free agent, or after he had made him, did not think fit to treat him as such; created him a being endued with a soul, an immaterial principle, equal to the angels; and yet used him as if he had given him only a body, equal to the brutes; thus preferring the lesser good to the greater, which the deity cannot do. And therefore it is a necessary consequence, that if God made man a free agent for certain ends, and yet did not reveal those ends in the revelation by Moses, he could not have treated the Jews as free agents, which he certainly did intend to do by making them such, or have promoted the greater eternal, in opposition to temporal happiness, which he always must and will do.

But in another view. Man was made a free agent, and had certain laws given him. But why was he to be punished eternally for breaking those laws? The justice of this proceeding was founded no doubt upon his knowing the consequences of breaking them; for it cannot be consistent with the justice of God to punish men for those crimes which they did not know deserved to be punished, *i. e.* did not know to be crimes. If men found it right to do certain actions, saw plainly that they would promote their temporal happiness, and had no other to promote, what can there be criminal in such actions? Where virtue often exposes men to dangers and hardships in this life, and vice often seduces by promises of temporal welfare; in such cases it must be fit and right that they, who have no notion of a future state, should be obliged to consult their happiness in this. Strict justice certainly cannot censure such a conduct, or punish men for doing what, according to the best light God hath given them, seems to be their duty to do.

And how is it that human lawgivers † proceed? Do they not promulgate the laws and their sanctions together? Knowing that is not a law but a matter of prudence, which they recommend to the practice of others without any sanctions. And was is not always reckoned the highest injustice to make punishments bear no proportion to crimes, to require obedience in certain points, to conceal the intention of requiring this obedience, thereby to punish the offenders not according to any prior law, but the present absolute will of the judge. This proceed-

* Locke's Hum. Unders. vol. i. p. 216, sects. 51, 52.
† Locke's Hum Unders. book 2, ch. 28, p 325, sect. 6

ing can only answer the ends of the most arbitrary government. A just lawgiver publishes his laws, shows men the reasonableness of observing, and the penalties they incur by breaking, them; thus he sets before them life and death, so that when they transgress, they know the consequences, and when they suffer, can blame none but their own sinful selves. Had not the penalties been known, the action had been indifferent, and it would have been extreme injustice to have punished, i. e. to have made that criminal afterwards, which was indifferent when it was done. But when the laws are fit and right in themselves, when the sanctions are known, and free agents have it in their power to choose, if in such circumstances they transgress, then and then only punishments are accounted reasonable and necessary.

And shall mankind act with so much wisdom, justice, and goodness? And shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Shall he alone promulgate his laws, and not show his servants the reasonableness of observing them, or the consequences of breaking them? Blind obedience, as it is not a matter of choice, can never be required by, or recommend us to, the Searcher of hearts. This is our merit in his eyes, if we have any merit in ourselves, to know our duty and the consequences of it, to be tempted by present advantages to neglect it, to prefer future expectations to those advantages, and so to resist the temptation. God himself * in scripture hath every where approved of this motive, hath mentioned the hopes of another life as the strongest motive to obedience, and therefore it cannot be consistent with the divine justice to require universal obedience, and yet to refuse men the strongest motive to it; or consistent with infinite goodness, not to communicate what infinite wisdom hath approved. If God does not afford this motive, how can he punish men for not attending to it? They are to be treated hereafter according to the choice they have made here; but if they could not think that a bad choice, which they could not discover had any bad consequences, why were they to be punished for not having more knowledge than their Creator was pleased to afford them means of attaining? Is it not cruelty that he who did not treat men as free agents here, should yet treat them as such hereafter? And what proceeding can be more unmerciful, more barbarous, than to condemn those to eternal misery, who could not know that their actions would lead them to it, and who might have been influenced to a contrary practice, by being informed that they might thereby have avoided that misery, and obtained happiness? For if happiness and misery were not offered to their choice, how could it be known which they would choose? Or if they did choose the means that led to misery, what more extreme injustice than to punish them for a choice occasioned by involuntary ignorance? If God then made man a free agent, put it in his power to make a wrong choice, and did not let him know the consequences of it, was not this, as it were, ensnaring him into misery, and intending him for destruction? † But this is the business of that being, who is the very reverse of the Deity. And therefore if the Jews were free agents, if God was concerned to treat them as such, and if without he revealed to them a future state he could not treat them as such here or hereafter, we may fairly conclude from the reason of the thing, that the law by Moses ought to contain something concerning a future state.

But to advance one step farther. The ignorance of a future state tended directly to destroy the practice of the means that lead to happiness, so that man, being a free agent, could neither be treated as such, nor attain the happiness he was intended for, without the knowledge of a future state. To this purpose, revealed reason will inform us, that the Deity is chiefly concerned to propagate wisdom and goodness: for as wisdom is the knowledge of what is right and fit in every case, and as goodness is the practice of such wisdom, these must be the chief objects of the divine care, the great points about which man's free-will was to be employed, and must comprehend the means to all human happiness. And the

* Matth. v. 12; vi. 33; Col. iii. 1, 2. 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; Heb. xiii. 2. Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 615, 616, sect. 8. par. 5. Bp. Wilkins' Sermons, 8vo. Scrm. 1st, on Heb. xi. 26, where he proves that it is necessary for the most eminent saints to strengthen and support themselves in their difficulties, by a special and particular regard to the recompence of reward.

† Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ, p. 610, 618, p. 11, c. 11.

same reason will also tell us, that if the law contained nothing about a future state, it could make the Jews neither wiser nor better, and therefore could not treat them as free agents; so that the end the Deity proposed, by making man a free agent was, defeated by himself, and the law, a divine revelation, by the very nature of it, promoted misery. But wiser this great silence about a future state could not make the Jews; because it fixed all their views on this life; it made only the good things of this world the centre of their joys, and therefore shut out every thought of that happiness for the enjoyment of which man was created. And this must have led them to the grossest ignorance of their duty. God every where in the Scriptures claims the heart and affections of man. He cannot suffer any rival in our esteem. He expects that all our faculties should be at all times consecrated to his service: for as he alone deserves our praise and worship, he therefore expects they should be paid to him alone: hence the necessary duty of setting our hearts entirely on things above, of directing all our actions to an heavenly country, and disengaging our affections from the world. But how can man give God his whole heart and affections, and withdraw himself from the things of this life, attentive to those of another, and how can God in justice expect those duties, if he doth not reveal to man that he doth expect them? For is it not impossible that men should be more conversant with those subjects which they have no notion of, than with those of which they are masters? Was it ever expected that men should be professors of any science before they were instructed in it, or could be perfect before they had begun to learn? Is not this to require men to see without eyes, and to hear without ears? The Jews therefore could not possibly have been made wiser by being ignorant of a future state, but must have entertained these absurd notions of the law, have taken the means to be the end, or that there were means which led to no end; or that man was made for some other end than he really was; or made for no noble end at all, made only for this world to get provisions, to propagate, to die, to rot.

If then we may be allowed to suppose, that God could not make the Jews wiser by keeping them in ignorance about a future state; and indeed there is something very paradoxical in imagining, that men may be made wiser by being kept in ignorance of that end, about which all their wisdom was to be employed, we may proceed to inquire, whether this ignorance could make them better? * And here one might insist on the necessity of adding knowledge to virtue, lest men should err by following a false rule of duty, or by acting upon wrong motives. One may show, that it is of the essence of every good action, that it should be free and matter of choice, and that it cannot be so in the present case. † And farther, that the Jews must have wanted the most powerful motive to the practice of virtue, that which takes strongest hold of the conscience, hath the greatest command over our hopes and fears, influences our thoughts as well as actions, and which alone can be an adequate foundation of universal obedience. But it will be sufficient to observe that virtue, or to act conformably to the known laws of God, supposes that free agents either know why they act so, or not. If the Jews had reasons which induced them to act virtuously, then it must be either the love of the law itself (but this it could not be, because they thought it was a real pain, yoke, bondage, slavery, and called it by almost every name that denotes an unwillingness of mind, and an uneasiness of body to observe it); or the love of its consequences; that future reward which they might hope for; but this they are supposed to be ignorant of, therefore they had no reason to be virtuous; and consequently, as they were free agents, they could not be virtuous at all. ‡

But it hath been said, that we are to practise virtue because God commands us. We may perhaps in our circumstances: but if God's laws had made us miserable here, and we had no expectations from him hereafter, what was todetermine us to observe his laws? We are told that gratitude would, and that this

* Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ, b. 3, ch. 1, p. 361, 362.

† Locke's Hum. Unders. vol. i. ch. 21, p. 221, sect. 60, and p. 228, sect. 70. Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. 471, 472.

‡ Law's preliminary Dissertation to King's Orig. of Evil, p. 62, 66.

calls upon us to make all possible returns of thankfulness to our benefactors. But if gratitude be a just sense and acknowledgment of favours received, it cannot be expressed to any being who makes us miserable. If our pleasures lie within a small compass, if there be ever something that embitters them and dulls their relish, if indulgence in them creates real pain, and if even a great part of those we are capable of receiving are forbidden, what room is there for thanks and praises? If our pains exceed our pleasures, it is absurd to be grateful: because to be pleased with pain is a contradiction in terms: and therefore, setting aside all hopes of an hereafter, there could be no room for gratitude, when we are made miserable by being brought into being. But if God should give us all the good things of this life, and make us really happy in this world, would not this be a sufficient motive to obedience without the knowledge of a future state? Neither could this of itself possibly answer the end proposed, because if men were absolutely free from wants, there could be no temptation, consequently no state of trial, and therefore no room for voluntary obedience.

This great silence about a future state, then, could not make the observers of the law either wiser or better. Every one will draw the inference, what therefore it did make them. And shall we suffer men to say that the law had such a design? That a revelation from God proposed such an unworthy end? That the moral perfections of the deity could authorize such immoral proceedings? Let us remove such unjust aspersions from the Supreme Being, and suppose a present that if we could not find out and prove that a future state does make part of the law, that however the perfections of the Deity, the end of man's creation, and the necessity of answering that end require that it ought to be there, and that our not seeing it immediately might perhaps be owing to our own ignorance, to our little insight into the customs, manners, and ceremonies of the Jews, the genius of their language, and the received opinions of the time when Moses wrote: to these and many other reasons a good man would be inclined to attribute his not discovering it immediately, before he would impeach the wisdom and goodness of God, and make him an imperfect being rather than own himself to be such an one.

But farther, the revelation by Moses could not come from God, without the doctrine of a future state was contained in it: for though it be true in fact, that God did see and prefer man's eternal happiness to temporal, though he made him a free agent, and he also might see and prefer it, and actually taught him the means to prefer and thereby attain it; yet man preferred an imaginary to a real good, made a wrong use of his free agency, neglected the means that lead to happiness, and chose the means to misery. As a consequence of this, God could not reveal his will to him whilst he was in this state, because as a sinner he was an object of the divine vengeance, of that justice which he had provoked, and of that punishment which he deserved.* If God had only left man in this state to himself, he would have been sufficiently tormented with his own terrors and despair. But that God did afterwards converse with him is a demonstration that his justice was appeased, that something had interposed to satisfy and avert the divine vengeance, and to restore man to favour and happiness. And that therefore the law by Moses, being given to those who had sinned and forfeited happiness, ought to contain the conditions upon which they might again attain it, and consequently not only the knowledge of a future state, but also the means of attaining an happy one.† For if Moses hath said, that man sinned, offended justice, could not of himself satisfy it, and that nevertheless God revealed his will to this sinful creature, is it not certain that justice was satisfied, and man again restored to favour? Otherwise what could have induced the Jews to the observance of the law, if it had not taught them some means of making this satisfaction, of reconciling them to God, and restoring them to happiness and heaven? For if they knew that God was offended with them, they must first be assured the service they paid would render them acceptable to him, before they could pay it: unless we can suppose them so stupid as to worship God without any reason, or

* Thirty-nine Articles, Art. 9, on Original Sin; and Art. 10, on Free-will; Art. 13.
† Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ, p. 600, 601, 602.

served him to offend and provoke him more. If, then, we can prove that the law came from God, and that the Jews ever observed it as such, it must certainly follow that it ought to be full of the doctrine of a future state.

There is an objection, which too much affects what hath been already observed and is too common not to be taken notice of, that many and repeated promises everywhere occur in the law, which relate only to the good things of this life; and this hath staggered even those persons who have been influenced by arguments drawn from the nature of the thing, to own that a future state ought to have made part of the law. It is indeed true in fact, that many of the rewards and punishments in the law are temporal; but then let it be remembered that the very ground and reason of insisting so much upon these was, that it was known there was also eternal. For I would observe, that at the time when Moses wrote, the greatest part of mankind had corrupted themselves, had withdrawn their allegiance from the true God, and set up the work of his hands in opposition to him. Most of those ancient idolaters (as it might easily be proved from numerous * authorities both of sacred and profane history,) worshipped the heavens, to which they attributed very great and extraordinary powers. It is very obvious to every one who is but superficially read in the Eastern histories, or the scriptures, that the host of heaven, the queen of heaven, the sun, the light, the moon, and stars, are everywhere represented to be the objects of their worship. In consequence of this we find they asserted, that the heavens were the givers of all temporal happiness, the causes of motion, of light, of heat, of the earth's motions, of the seasons, of vegetation, the flux and reflux of the sea, the supporters of the animal economy, and of every operation in matter. But they did not stop here, they supposed them also to be independent, thought that they, whom they saw the chief rulers in this system, had this power originally in themselves. They who set up false gods, set up at the same time false redeemers, and therefore can have no benefit from the true. If then God was at all times concerned to prevent this false worship from becoming universal, lest the grand scheme of redemption should be defeated (for universal corruption must have brought on a universal destruction), then he must have been particularly concerned to keep the Jews from this crime, not only because they were the sole people upon the earth to whom he at that time chose to reveal his will; but also because it was determined that the Messiah should descend from a branch of this nation. And what was the most likely method to keep the Jews from this idolatry? If God had indeed given to the objects that were worshipped, a delegated power, he could not take it from them without destroying the system. But if he could prove himself superior to those his rivals, and demonstrate that they were absolutely dependent on him; if he could support his followers without their assistance, and destroy those who expected protection from them, this method will certainly preserve them from the false worship, and attach them to the true God: and there would be no fear of success, if God would grant the Jews all the temporal blessings which his rivals were supposed to give, and defend them in the possession of those blessings which though the false worshippers expected, yet could they not receive from their gods. And this indulgent method the Deity was pleased to take. Did his rivals pour down all temporal blessings on their worshippers? So did he on his. Were they the known causes that a land flowed with milk and honey? The God of Israel was infinitely liberal to the Jews of those favours. Were they the givers of wine and oil, and bread? Jehovah was to give these even by a miracle rather than the Jews should want. Were they imagined to be able to avert distempers from their followers? Every obedient Jew had an assurance that he should never experience sickness or pain. Did they make their followers prosperous, give them

* J Boulduc, de Ecclesia ante Legem, 281, &c. The Chevalier Ramsay's Discourse on the Theology and Mythology of the Pagans, p. 2, parag. 2. T. Goodwin's Civil and Ecclesiastical Rites of the Hebrews, p. 142, 143, 144, 145, 160, 161, 162, 163. An Essay to a Natural History of the Bible, by John Hutchinson. Acts vii. 42, 43. Diogenes Laert. de Vitis Phil. ed. H. Stephens, 1593, p. 7. Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ, 42, 43, 44. L. 21. The worship of the sun, as far as we can learn, was the great and most early idolatry of the eastern countries, &c. p. 219, 220. J. Bossuet, Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle, p. 195.

fruitful seasons, great increase of flocks and herds, rain to refresh and enrich the thirsty ground, and whatever filleth the heart of man with joy and gladness? The worshippers of the true God of heaven were indulged even to luxury in those blessings. Were they the givers of long life, of a numerous issue, of victory over enemies, of success in every undertaking, or whatever advantages the false worshippers expected? Those Jehovah was pleased to engage his omnipotence to secure to the Jews. And to prove his superiority in every respect, he by many unquestionable miracles (suited to this end) delivered his servants from the slavery of one land, and put them in possession of another, where his rivals being worshipped and overcome, made it almost impossible for any thinking Jew to doubt whether they had any power in themselves independent of Jehovah the God (Elohim) of Israel. So that this truth was fully demonstrated, that there were no other gods to whom the worship and service of man was due, but the Lord alone. This was one reason (among many others) why the good things of this life are so often promised in the law. The Deity could not have made a more glorious display of infinite wisdom, mercy, and power, than by such a condescension to the circumstances of mankind, unless by the scheme of redemption, to which this also related and was preparatory: he could not otherwise have demonstrated his superiority, or brought about his gracious designs. If this then be one undeniable reason why God insisted so much on temporal blessings, it is manifest that a future state must have been taken for * granted both by the Jews and idolaters, otherwise the end of being so very much concerned about them is lost, and the scripture must be false which asserts that God chiefly granted them with an higher view, with respect to eternal blessings.

Many authorities will be produced from Moses to prove this point, but let the argument in the text suffice at present. Thus (Exod. xx. 2.) "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other," implies they were to worship the Lord alone, because he was their God; then the sanction of this commandment, which forbids idolatry, is not present happiness, but future; or, as Christ hath inferred, the resurrection of the body. So that the blessings of heaven itself, as well as of this world, were promised to be the rewards of those who kept themselves free from idolatry. And that the idolaters also expected a future state is certain, because they all did something for their dead, † sacrificed to make their gods propitious to their departed friends, anointed their bodies with what was consecrated toi, and descriptive of what was to entitle them to the favour of, the gods, and afterwards carefully laid up their bodies in monuments representative of those powers which they thought their gods had to raise them from the dead. Thus much we find they did even in the time of Moses. A future state then seems to have been known both by the Jews and idolaters, and therefore if the general object of the heathens' worship were the heavens; if God was concerned to prevent this false worship from becoming universal, to effect the greatest and most merciful design, the redemption of man; and if the method he took was the best and wisest, *viz.* to grant the Jews all those blessings which the idolaters expected, and to secure the enjoyment of them which he alone could do, what can be more plain than that a future state ought to make a great part of the law: because we can give a rational account why God insisted so much on temporal blessings; and because it hath appeared that even these were founded upon a supposition that it was known there were also eternal; so that the objection, that temporal promises and threatenings everywhere occur in the law, need not now be a stumbling block to any of Moses' friends. It is a sufficient answer (even if we could give no better), that the Deity was with no other view so much concerned about the temporal happiness of the Jews, but as it was founded upon and tended to promote their eternal; ‡ that he was indulgent of the good things of this life, to

* See Stillingfleet's reasons of Moses insisting so little on this doctrine, book 3, ch. 1, page 363, &c. sect. 2.

† Deut. xxvi. 14; Psalm cvi. 28; Deut. xiv. 1. T. Goodwin's Civil and Ecclesiastical Rites of the Hebrews, p. 243, parag. 3.

‡ Wollebii Compend. Theol. Christianæ, p. 60. Promissiones terrenæ cœlestium rerum sunt symbola, falso igitur Servetani et Anabaptistæ somniant, promissiones illas tantum terrenas esse. Terrenæ cœlestes includunt. Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ, p. 221, &c. sect.

engage their affections to him, and the good things of another; and that if he had not been pleased to proceed in this merciful manner, neither they nor we (if the vices of mankind can defeat the gracious intentions of the Deity towards them) could have had any happiness here or hereafter.

Let it be sufficient to have observed thus much from reason, or the nature of the thing, that the doctrine of a future state ought to have made part of the law by Moses. We are now to inquire what proofs there are in the New Testament that Moses hath wrote about a future state: but before we proceed to this inquiry, it will be proper to show what weight such proofs ought to have with us.

1. Then the Old and the New Testaments contain two dependent parts of one grand dispensation, viz. Christianity. This will not be disputed by any one who allows that they both came from God after the fall, and that "Christ was the end of the law," Rom. x. 4.

2. As they came from God, and proposed the same end, they must therefore be true and infallible: for God cannot deceive or be deceived, and the same end cannot be attained by contrary means.

3. Having the same end in view, and being both of them infallible, they must therefore confirm and strengthen each other's evidence: for they are both means to attain one and the same end, and one truth cannot overthrow or destroy another truth.

4. And therefore if they should contradict one another, this is a sufficient proof that they could not be two dependent parts of one grand dispensation, nor come from God, and that therefore one of them, if not both, are false and forged: because if they be false in any one point, it cannot be proved that they are infallible in all, and because the same proposition cannot be both true and false at the same time.

5. If then it cannot be asserted in the New Testament, that the doctrine of a future state is delivered in the Old, without destroying its own authority, if it be not in it, and if notwithstanding this, it is directly asserted in the New Testament that it is in the Old, and yet is not, as some men think, in fact to be found there, is it not a plain consequence that they who maintain this are inconsistent with themselves, if they do not deny and give up the authority of one of the Testaments? There cannot be a more effectual method taken to overthrow revelation than this, and I wish it may not be the cause that the author of the Divine Legation and his followers would support: they cannot be ignorant that they are labouring to set one Testament against the other, thereby to overthrow the authority of both. We grant them, indeed, that if either of the Testaments contradict each other, they cannot both be the word of God: but then we insist that they nowhere contradict themselves, and that in the present case the doctrine of a future state (as will hereafter appear) is as plainly delivered by Moses in the Old Testament, as it is asserted to be there by Christ and his apostles in the New.

From these promises it may be justly concluded, that it is an infallible proof to us, who hold the divine authority of both Testaments, that Moses hath treated of a future state in the law, if it be affirmed in the gospel that he hath treated of it there: for these are obvious and certain truths, that God cannot contradict himself, that infinite wisdom cannot be deceived, that infinite power need not, and goodness will not, deceive, and that therefore there must be a perfect harmony and agreement of all the revelations from God.

The passages in the New Testament, in which it is asserted that Moses hath treated of a future state, are so many and plain that their meaning cannot be disputed. The parable of the rich man and the beggar is a remarkable instance of this truth. (Luke xvi.) Dives, being in hell, entreats Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house, to testify to his brethren, lest they also should come into that place of torments. This certainly was to let his brethren know that there was a future state of rewards and punishments. The answer is, "That if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Then there is greater evidence for this truth

2. Calvin, Instit. Christ. Relig. Gen. Fol. from p 82 to 87. And all the writers against the Anabaptists and Antinomians.

in the writings of Moses and the prophets than even a message from the other world would be.* This inference is so direct, that whilst the words have any meaning, it will be impossible to elude the force of them, or to explain them away.

Agreeably to this place we find St. Paul preached a future state and resurrection of the body upon Moses' authority, (Acts xxvi. 22, 23,) "I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first (which necessarily implies that others after him were also) to arise from the dead." Doth Moses, then, say that Christ was to suffer and to arise from the dead? And doth St. Paul affirm that he doth say so? And can any Christian after this doubt whether such doctrines are really taught by Moses? It is almost a demonstration, that if St. Paul was inspired, of course infallible, and therefore could not possibly be ignorant of what was contained in Moses' writings; and that if he hath said a future state was mentioned there, that therefore it must be there.

But let us hear Christ himself preaching the same doctrines from Moses that St. Paul did. All his disciples after his death doubted of his resurrection, and yet before they could preach this fundamental article to others, they were to be convinced of it themselves. To this end in his conversation with two of them, who were going to Emmaus, he reproves their slowness in believing that he ought to have suffered, died, and rose from the dead, as Moses and the prophets had foretold. The words are these, (Luke xxiv. 25, &c.) "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," *viz.* what Moses and the prophets had wrote about his sufferings and resurrection.† In the following part of the chapter this truth is more fully expressed—"These," says Christ to his disciples, "are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Doth Christ then affirm that it was written in the law of Moses, that he was to suffer, and to arise from the dead? And shall there be a Christian priest suffered in a Christian country with equal impudence and blasphemy to contradict Christ, and to maintain that such doctrines are not written in the law of Moses? Hath Christ said that those persons "do greatly err, and do not know the scriptures," who affirm that Moses hath not mentioned a future state, and is it possible that man can believe Christ to be God, who positively declares, that he "neither doth err, nor is ignorant of the scriptures," whilst he directly writes against the true literal meaning of Christ's words? And how doth it alleviate his crime to tell us, that he intends to strengthen the evidence of revelation by his system. Doth it not require too much credulity and ignorance for any man in his senses to believe that those persons are supporting the superstructure, who are removing and taking away the foundation? Christianity hath no support if Christ should fall, and either he or Moses must fall, if he affirms, that Moses hath wrote about certain subjects, and it could not be made appear that he hath once mentioned them.

But there is a passage in St. John, (v. 39, &c.) where, if words have any meaning, it is asserted, not only that Moses wrote about a future state, but that the Jews also knew he had. "Search the scriptures," says Christ, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." All the

* Whitby on the New Test. vol. 1, p. 398. D. Stellæ in Lucam Comm. tom. 2, p. 302. Martinus Bucerus in Quart. Evang. p. 216. J. Lindsay on the New Test. Lond. 1736, p. 216. Marlorati Biblioth. Expositionum in Nov. Test. 333. J. Tirinus in Nov. Test. p. 999.

† Grotii, Op. Theol. vol. 2, p. 465. F. Gaspari, a Melo Comm. in Lucam, p. 1145, 1146, &c. D. Stellæ in Lucam Comment. Lugd. 1592, tom. 2, p. 516, 517. Acts xvii. 2, 3.

scriptures testify of Christ, and Moses in a particular manner; for, as he adds, "had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me."* So the Jews had, or however thought they had, eternal life in Moses' writings.† Moses, then, did write about eternal life, if Christ knew what he wrote about, and if the Jews all along believed that he had. And this sense, and this only, the argument will bear.‡ There is evidence, says Christ, in Moses, that the Messiah was to entitle you to eternal life; you think that you have this evidence in Moses, and yet you act inconsistently with yourselves by not believing in me, the Messiah, and life eternal. I will not therefore accuse you hereafter, because you did not believe my words or miracles. Moses shall accuse you, because you have not made the right use of that evidence which he gave you, and which ought to have determined you to accept me as the Messiah; and thereby that life eternal, which you think you have, and which you cannot otherwise have, in his writings.

That the Jews had such a belief and hope founded upon Moses' writings, St. Paul will abundantly convince us: in his vindication of himself to the governor Felix, he makes this confession, "After the way which they (the Jews) call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets, and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." (Acts xxiv. 14, 15.) Then St. Paul was induced from his belief of what was written in the law of Moses and the prophets to have hope, which hope from the same belief the Jews also had, and allowed they had, that there was to be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and unjust. And therefore both St. Paul and the Jews must have thought that there was in Moses sufficient evidence to determine them to believe, that there was to be a future state of rewards and punishments. Some part of this evidence St. Paul himself hath explained to us, (Heb. ix. 7, 8, &c.) "But into the second (tabernacle) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing; which was a figure for the time then present." Then it was signified to the Jews who had that tabernacle, and by Moses who constituted it, that there was to be a way made manifest into the holiest of all. The apostle is here talking of the Jewish times, and of the ceremonies appointed by Moses, and says that he made those ceremonies figures to them of something farther; that the high priest going into the holy of holies was a figure to them, and therefore of course understood by them, that there was to be "another high priest who should carry other blood, (ver. 24), not into the holy places made with hands, the figures of the true holy places, but into heaven itself." This chapter, and indeed this whole epistle, deserves to be seriously considered by every infidel Sadducee: for if Moses hath by expressive actions or figures described the Jews' hope in a future state, and in Christ who is life eternal, and if St. Paul asserts that he hath, and that the Jews knew he had, and if we still find those very figures in the law, can any thing be more plain than that a future state ought to have made a great part of the writings of Moses? For why doth the apostle assert, that the law was spiritual, was intended to keep up the Jews' faith and hopes in Christ? Why doth he recapitulate the chief part of the religious ceremonies of the Jews, and apply them to Christ and his actions? Call them figures for the time then present. Figures of the true things—The example and shadow of heavenly things—The shadow of the good things to come—and from hence prove, that a true notion of the law must of course lead men to the gospel, if either those ceremonies had not that meaning, or if the Jews did not allow that they had?

* Poli Synopsis Cr. vol. 4, p. 1217, 1218. Critici Sacri, vol. 6, p. 1626. Notæ Cameron. in v. 39. Hammond on the New Test. p. 280. J. Piscator in Nov. Test. vol. 3, p. 323. J. Lindsay on the New Test. p. 276. Assembly's Annot. on the Old and New Test. vol. 2, and Notes on 39, 40, &c. ver. of the 5th chap. of John.

† J. le Clerc, sur le Neuf Test. p. 281. "Moise auquel vous esperez; par la doctrine duquel vous esperez d'obtenir la vie eternelle."

‡ Erasmi Paraph. in Nov. Test. p. 339. M. Bucerus in Quart. Evang. 257. J. Toletus in Evang. Johannis Comm. Cologne, 1611, p. 503.

But those happy effects which flowed from not taking the ceremonies of the law in a literal sense, and the consequent hopes of future happiness, are so fully described in the 11th chapter of the Hebrews, that every Christian must believe the patriarchs and Jews did not rest upon the temporal promises, but were as well acquainted with a future state as we are at present. The connexion between the knowledge of Christ and a future state is so inseparable, that we need not lose time to prove it: and that the faith here so much insisted on is faith in Christ, the definition in the first verse fully proves; because no other can teach us the substance of what we are to hope for, or give us evidence of the things we have not seen; and because this faith was able to effect the salvation of the soul, which none but the Christian faith can do. (Heb. x. 38, 39, and Acts iv. 12.) And certainly when "Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," (ver. 26,) this could be nothing but faith in Christ, by whose merits he had learned "to have respect to the recompense of reward:" and so all the other instances of faith in the mercies of God, which only are to be obtained through faith in Christ. Let St. Peter convince us what this faith is. "Now, therefore," (says he to the apostles and elders, who were met to consider whether it was necessary for Christians to observe the law,) "why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they," (Acts xv. 10, 11.) Then the fathers were saved by a belief in Jesus Christ, and therefore had not only faith in him, but knew that salvation also which he was to purchase for them. And if it be faith in Christ, every instance expresses their belief of a future state.* Thus Abraham certainly believed a future state, when he accounted that God was able to raise him up Isaac even from the dead. Thus the women who received their dead raised to life again; and they who did not desire deliverance from their tortures here, hoping they might obtain a better resurrection hereafter, "they who confessed they were strangers on the earth and sought after a heavenly country; they of whom this world was not worthy;" and they who, notwithstanding all their present sufferings for the sake of religion, believed that God "was a rewarder of them who diligently seek him;" and such, St. Paul says, they all believed him to be: all these must have had a perfect knowledge and strong hopes of a happy immortality. For, as he observes, "these all died in faith," so had faith in their death, and therefore did not confine their views to this life: because he justly adds, though they had not received the promises, *i. e.* had not seen the completion of them, yet they saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them: Acts xiii. 32, 33, fully prove, that it was the demonstration of a resurrection given us in the actual raising of Christ's body which they had not received.† Not that they had not been told of, or had not received promises, that their own bodies were to be raised. "The promise" (says St. Paul) "which

* Hammond on the 11th chapter of Heb. p. 754, &c. Theophylact. in Epist. 991 to 1008. Whitby on the New Testament, vol. 2, from p. 536 to 544. J. Lindsay on the New Test. 778 to 783. Critici Sacri, vol. 7, page 4325. Drusii Not. Bishop Wilkins, Serm. 8vo. p. 16. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." "Where among the things hoped for and not seen, are clearly meant the happiness and salvation we expect hereafter, the rewards of a better life, which faith doth as really discern in the promises, as if they were actually present to the sense. Hence it is that salvation is said to be the end of faith, 'receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.' 1 Pet. i. 9. So, then, if all religious actions be derived from faith, as the main root and principle of them, and if faith doth chiefly refer to the rewards hoped for and not seen, then it must follow that it is as necessary for a believer to have a principal aim at the rewards, as it is for him to live by faith; and that he may as well pretend to be above the life of faith, as to be above the help of those encouragements of the rewards and promises proposed in scripture; and so far as faith hath an influence upon our religious actions, so far must we respect the recompense of reward." See the whole discourse.

† Grotii Op. Theol. vol. 3, p. 658. Poli Synopsis Cr. vol. 4, p. 1607. Hammond on the New Test p. 429. Acts xxvi. 6 "And accordingly now I am accused for asserting the resurrection of the dead, which as it is a doctrine acknowledged by the Pharisees, so is it the fundamental promise made of old." Whitby on the New Test. vol. 1, p. 708, 709. Titus i. 2. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." See the absurdity of the translation, from Acts iii. 21; 2 Tim. i. 9; and Rom. xvi. 25. Critici Sacri, vol. 7, p. 2432. Clarii Notæ, Acts xxvi. 6.

was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he has raised up Jesus again." In Acts xxvi. 6, 7, and 8th verses, and in many other places, the same expression occurs. Then it appears that God had promised the fathers he would raise up Jesus from the dead, though the fathers did not live to see and receive the actual completion of that promise, but yet, as above cited, "saw it from afar, were persuaded of it," and, fully believing it would be performed in due time, embraced it. Thus in the resurrection of Jesus was a demonstration given of life and immortality, the promise made to the fathers fulfilled, and in this sense "Life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel." Though in any other sense it could not have been first discovered by the personal preaching of Christ and his apostles; because, if the gospel brought it to light, then the Jews must have been acquainted with it· "for unto them, as well as unto us, was the gospel preached," Heb. iv. 2.

But if the author of the Divine Legation should take up the arms with which the infidels have all along assaulted Moses, and it is certain he can have no other to defend his unchristian cause but the often foiled weapons of Sadducees, Infidels, and Atheists; and if he should object in their words, "That supposing a future state was typified under the law, yet it had no better effect than if it had not, because it was so hidden and obscure that the Jews did not see it." But if St. Paul hath showed us some of the types that were intended to point out a future state, and if he hath said that the Jews knew this, that they looked beyond the types, and if it be nowhere said that they did not see and believe a future state, then one may presume that the authority of Christ and his apostles, who affirm that the Jews did see it, will convince every Christian that they actually did.* The apostle of the Gentiles forbids us to doubt of this point. "The law," says he, "was our schoolmaster unto Christ;" was to teach us first the letters, the types of which the service of the law consisted, which is the first business of a schoolmaster; and afterwards the meaning of them, what they represented, and what ideas they were designed to convey, of what persons, what objects, what actions. This is the next business of a schoolmaster, and indeed the chief. And, therefore, if the Jewish service consisted of such types, the Jews must have seen the meaning of them, not only because they could not be types to them unless understood, but also because it was the business of the law to be their schoolmaster to teach them how to understand them. And, consequently, if St. Paul hath said that there were certain types in the law, which were designed to point out a future state, and that the law was a schoolmaster to teach what they did point out, it follows that it could not but teach the Jews a future state: unless St. Paul should not have known the design of the law, or the law itself should prove a bad schoolmaster. But hear the same apostle on this subject. After he had told us, (Heb. ix. 19, 20, &c.) "That almost all things by the law are purged with blood, and that without shedding of blood there is no remission," he adds, "It was, therefore, necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens," things that demonstrated, pointed out, *viz.* the ceremonies of the law, under which the heavenly things were demonstrated: so spoke a language very intelligible to every thinking Jew who had a soul to be saved, and which could not be saved but by knowing and believing that they were only the types and figures of the heavenly things, which types it was necessary should be purified with these things that were also types. It was necessary that the law should contain such external objects to describe the person, actions, and sufferings of Christ, and convey the benefits of them, to purify. Christ was at a distance: it was, therefore, necessary that the wrath he had engaged to undergo, and all the circumstances of his sufferings, should be, on many accounts, pointed out and demonstrated continually till he came. The external action, the type, was necessary, because the Jews had bodies: and faith, or an insight into the spiritual sense, was necessary, because they had souls which only can be purified through

* See Bishop Bull's Sermons, vol. 2, p. 574. Where he strongly proves, throughout this whole discourse, that the Jews, even before the law, understood and believed that they should be rewarded after this life. Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ, p. 174, 175, 176, sect. 8. Acts iii. 21, 24, &c.

faith, hope, and charity.* And thus it was necessary there should be material objects to demonstrate the heavenly things, because the eye of the soul sees only through the eye of the body: but the heavenly things themselves (which these demonstrated) by better sacrifices than these; it was necessary to the nature of the soul, that there should be faith, that it should be purified by the originals themselves, by looking at the real blood of that person, which the blood of the beasts demonstrated. All the types and ceremonies were demonstrations of something they pointed at; material representations of something spiritual, which could communicate no virtue but when carried up from the literal to a higher meaning: because those things which the law demonstrated, as remission by blood, &c. were to be rightly apprehended before effectual. The beast, till Christ came, was to be slain, his blood to be poured out, some parts to be burnt, &c. But then the benefit the sacrificer was taught to expect was from a better sacrifice than this: he was, if St. Paul may be believed, to look upon it in no other view, than as it demonstrated the great sacrifice of Christ, who was in effect "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And, therefore, if the law did really explain its types and ceremonies, and if St. Paul says it was necessary it should do this, should contain demonstrations of heavenly things, was it not also necessary the Jews should know it?† Else how could it demonstrate what was not seen, or why was it a pattern, unless they could observe some comparison?

But if it should be said, as it often hath been, that if the Jews were always capable of this spiritual sense, what occasion for a carnal one? The reason of instituting the types hath been hinted at above, and will be more fully considered under my second proposition. But let it suffice to observe at present, that though the Egyptian religion was hieroglyphical, yet it was not therefore unintelligible: did not the Greeks travel thither for knowledge, and set up for philosophers with the small stock they had got from the Egyptian priests? And if all our knowledge come in originally by our senses, is it not absolutely necessary that we should have some outward and visible signs of what is absent and invisible? Are not the Christian sacraments such, and are they not more useful, the more plain and expressive they are? And if they had not been intelligible and adapted to the meanest capacities, with what justice could God have so often reproved the Jews by his prophets for resting on the letter of the law? or where would be the crime of the apostate author of the Plain Account to degrade and sink one of the Christian sacraments into a common meal? The Jewish as well as the Christian religion was intended to make men wise unto salvation, and therefore whether or no they knew that salvation, yet certainly the means ought to have been plain and obvious, otherwise it could not have been criminal to have had a wrong notion of the means, when they were ignorant of the end. There was this occasion, then, for the carnal sense, that the spiritual could not have subsisted without it, and that we must have such helps, whilst we go through this state of trial to the regions of vision and happiness.

I have mentioned but a small part of the evidence which the New Testament affords to prove that a future state ought to have made part of the law by Moses. However, enough hath been said to convince every Christian that such a doctrine actually is there, because Christ and his apostles have asserted that it is—have produced texts from Moses to prove the certainty of it—have said that he wrote about Christ's resurrection and ours—that the ceremonies instituted by him were intended to describe the Jews' hope in a future state—that the whole law was spiritual—was a shadow of the good things to come—of the true things—an example and shadow of heavenly things—and a figure to the time then present. So it was in Moses' writings whether the Jews saw it or no; but numbers are mentioned who did see it, who saw the promises afar off; were persuaded of them, and in consequence thereof expected a happy resurrection.

But we need not rest the point here. If it hath appeared from plain arguments drawn from the reason of the thing, and from positive texts of scripture, that the doctrine of a future state ought to be found in the law, may we not fairly conclude that it is there, that it is actually to be found in and doth make

* Rom. ii 28, 29. Deut. x. 16; viii. 3. Rom. iii. 30, 31; x. 5, 6. 1 Cor. x. to ver. 13.
† Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacræ, p. 223, 224, sect. 12.

a very great part of the writings of Moses. One might easily show the force of this conclusion, if we had no better proofs: but when we shall have proved our second proposition "that the doctrine of a future state actually is to be found in and doth make a very great part of the writings of Moses; the obligation to observe every law, rite, and ceremony being enforced upon the sanctions of future rewards and punishments," this will more fully clear up the point. The time will not permit me to prove and enlarge upon it at present. I will only trespass upon your patience whilst I mention one thing, which comes particularly recommended to the serious attention of every one in this place, *viz.* that the articles and homilies of the church of England expressly assert, that Moses hath treated of a future state. The 7th article begins thus:

"The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Whereof they are not to be heard, which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises."

The words of the second part of the homily on faith are these: "This is the Christian faith, which these holy men (of whom St. Paul speaks in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews) had, and we also ought to have. And although they were not named Christian men, yet was it a Christian faith that they had, for they looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, as we do now.* And in effect they and we be all one. We have the same faith that they had in God, and they the same that we have. And St. Paul so much extolleth their faith, because we should not less, but rather more, give ourselves wholly unto Christ, both in profession and living, now when Christ is come, as the old fathers did before his coming. And by all the declarations of St. Paul it is evident, that the true, lively, and Christian faith is no dead, vain, or unfruitful thing, but a thing of perfect virtue, of wonderful operation, of working and strength, bringing forth all good motions and good works."

If then the articles and homilies of the Church of England assert, that the fathers of the Jewish nation expected a future state of eternal happiness through the merits of Christ, we, who have subscribed to those articles and homilies, must believe this doctrine. And if men may disbelieve the articles and homilies, and yet subscribe to them—and after that subscription write directly against those very doctrines to which they have subscribed—and if they should be encouraged and countenanced by numbers who also have subscribed to them—and if that very church, which requires this subscription, should not censure such a manifest breach of her laws, which she maintains are founded upon the laws of God; this would be a most melancholy state of religion; and from such persons and such proceedings will all Christians pray,—"Good Lord deliver us."

* 1 John v. 11. "God hath given us eternal life, and that life is in his Son;" therefore if they knew the Son (Christ) they must know eternal life. Life and immortality were lost and forfeited in Adam, and restored to us again by Jesus Christ, and how then could there be faith in Christ, unless there was an assurance that he would give them the eternal life forfeited? Can that be faith in Christ, which hath no regard to what he was to do and suffer for us, or to what end he was to suffer? But if it was the same faith as we have, then the homily means, that they expected all the same advantages as we do here and hereafter, from our common Redeemer, and our common faith in him. Heb. vi. 1, 2. Acts iv. 2. Rom. vi. 23.

FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS PROVED TO BE THE SANCTIONS OF THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

IN

A SECOND SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, AT ST. MARY'S, DECEMBER 6, 1741.

And Jesus answering, said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall arise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. And as touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.—Mark xii. 24, 25, &c.

In a former discourse upon these words, I proposed to prove, "That future rewards and punishments were the sanctions of the Mosaic dispensation;" and it was shown in the first place, "from the reason of the thing," and from the scriptures of the New Testament, that the doctrine of a future state was taught by Moses, and known by the Jews. The second point then laid down, which is the matter of our present inquiry, is this—

"That the doctrine of a future state actually is to be found in, and doth make a very great part of, the writings of Moses; the obligation to observe every law, rite, and ceremony, being enforced upon the sanctions of future rewards and punishments."

I. And here two things are asserted, *viz.* "that the doctrine of a future state actually is to be found in, and doth make a very great part of, the writings of Moses." And this I shall prove by producing these texts from Moses wherein he expressly mentions it.

II. The other thing asserted is, "that the obligation to observe every law, rite, and ceremony, is enforced by Moses upon the sanctions of future rewards and punishments." And this I shall prove from these texts wherein he expressly declares, that these were the sanctions of all his laws.

And in order to clear up the truth of these two assertions, no other method can be taken but to mention the very words of Moses, and to show what they express intelligibly, and without a figure: for the view in which I shall consider the passages cited from him is this: "The rites and services of the Mosaic law, prefigured what Christ was to do and suffer for the salvation of mankind." This is a point which cannot be debated among Christians, but that the Jews understood them in this sense hath been denied. In what manner, then, a future state was contained under the types, will not be the subject of our present inquiry; not because arguments drawn from thence would be inconclusive, but because it would be more satisfactory and to the purpose to prove, "that there are such plain and express passages in Moses, which treat of a future state, and of future rewards and punishments, that no Jew, who understood Moses' writings, could possibly be ignorant of these doctrines." With this view, then, let us consult the living oracles of God. And,

I. The first text I shall produce is from * Gen. ii. 7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath

* Pererii Com. in Gen. Lugd. 1599, p. 425.

of life; and man became a living soul." Here the Holy Spirit hath purposely treated of the nature and union of soul and body—"He hath revealed that man was made up of two parts—he hath described the original of each—and the essential attributes in which they differed." The original of the body of Adam is said to be of the dust of the ground; the soul had a different original, and was created by the Father of spirits—the one was formed out of matter, and was a living animal—the other, which the Lord God breathed or infused into Adam, was produced by his immediate creative act, and was an immaterial and immortal soul. Now these two attributes distinguish the soul from the body, the distinction between them consisting chiefly in these two things—that the soul is not material, and is not mortal. And how could the Holy Spirit, when he purposely described the different nature of soul and body, make the distinction without mentioning the attributes of difference? As the reason of the thing proves this could not be done, so neither was it done. For

II. The immortality of the soul, is in this text expressly revealed. By immortality I mean, "that the soul doth not cease to exist with the body; but when the animal frame is dissolved, it continues still in the full enjoyment of all its faculties, and as susceptible of pleasure and pain in a future state, as it was in the present." And this immortality is here plainly expressed: for the word rendered life, is in the original * plural, חיים [Kiim], and used here by the Holy Spirit, not merely for the idiom of the language; because, whatever be the idiom of other languages, it is the undoubted idiom of the sacred language to represent things as they are, which it cannot do, if it were to express an attribute of unity by a word carrying in it the idea of plurality; and not used for want of a singular noun, because it frequently occurs in the † singular number: but it is here used to express an attribute which distinguished the soul from the body; for the text says, that the body had but life, or was living, in distinction to the soul which had lives. Now the soul which hath lives must of necessity have more than one—the present life can be but one—therefore the soul hath another life—and another life being not the present, must of necessity be a future—and a future life, or the soul's continuing to exist after the dissolution of the body, being what is meant by the immortality of the soul; in this text, therefore, it is, as expressly as words can speak, revealed, that the soul of man is immortal. And how could the Holy Spirit have laid this doctrine open to the Jews in a plainer manner than by revealing, that the soul which the Lord God breathed or infused into the body of Adam, was not made up of frail materials, and liable to be dissolved: but did continue to exist after its separation? And whilst the Jews understood their own language, how could they be ignorant of a doctrine laid open to them in so plain a manner? And

III. Besides this reasoning drawn from the meaning of the words, there is an infallible authority which hath fixed their meaning, and thereby unanswerably proved, that the reasoning drawn from them is just. St. Peter speaking by the same Spirit of God which spake in Moses hath proved, that David foretold the resurrection of Christ, when he said "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." And then it immediately follows, "Thou shalt show me the path of lives." ‡ Now in consequence of Christ's not seeing corruption, he was to be shown the path of lives; and therefore the word "lives" here manifestly includes that life which Christ entered upon when he rose from the dead—and this was certainly an immortal life: "For they who are accounted worthy to obtain a future world and the resurrection of the dead, cannot die any more." And consequently this is an infallible proof, that the word Kiim is expressive of immortality.

IV. But further, the expression doth not only declare that there is another state besides this, in which the soul will exist; but it also justifies the latter part of the definition, "that the soul will be as susceptible of pleasure and pain in a future state as it was in the present:" for certainly to have life in the proper

* Gen. xxiii. 1. § Crit. Sacr. tom. i. p. 36. Fagius.
† Gen. i. 20, 30. § xlii. 15, 16. § Lev. xiii. 10, &c.
‡ Lorinus in Act. Apost. p. 96. Act. iv. v. 28.

sense of the word, is to have what always attends life—sensation. Life and sensation are ideas inseparably united; so that whatever being the one is predicated of, the other is of necessity implied—and whatever hath sensation must also have either pleasure or pain; for pleasure and pain are only words which stand for our ideas of certain sensations. The Holy Spirit then asserts that the soul lives when separated from the body. Now it is absurd to suppose the soul living, and yet neither sensible of pleasure nor pain; and therefore, he hath by this assertion expressly revealed, that the soul exists in a future state of pleasure and pain, *i. e.* of rewards and punishments.

From these reasons, then, it is evident, that the Holy Spirit hath, in this text, expressly revealed the immortality of the soul and a future state: and this is abundantly confirmed from what is afterwards revealed concerning immortality. Among the other institutions in Eden, (Gen. ii. 9,) the Spirit of God hath mentioned the tree of lives, "which was a sacrament instituted to be the earnest and pledge of eternal life."—* It was a sacrament: because the virtue attributed to it could not be naturally inherent in it, but must have depended solely on the power of the institutor. And it was "instituted to be the earnest and pledge of eternal life;" because the words assert that it was a tree of lives, or immortality; and also because, when man had by his sin forfeited this sacrament of immortality, and was taught to expect salvation only through faith in Christ, that salvation through faith in him is still called by the same name as the first sacrament of immortality was, *viz.* the tree of lives—"To him that overcometh," saith the Spirit, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, that is in the midst of the Paradise of God;" (Rev. ii. 7;) and in another place, "Blessed are they that do the commandments of Christ, that they may have right to the tree of life." (Rev. xxii. 14.) Here the New Testament borrows an expression from the Old, to describe the life and immortality brought to light by Christ; and therefore the expression used in the New Testament to convey ideas of a happy immortality, must certainly have intelligibly described that immortality in the Old; for the words are the same in both Testaments, and consequently the ideas which they convey in both must be the same: so that Christ is now, to fallen man, what the tree of immortality was to innocent Adam—the virtue attributed to the one, being what is also attributed to the other—Christ is really to fallen man the fountain of everlasting life; therefore such sacramentally was the tree of immortality to innocent Adam: for it would be very absurd, if Christ should be made to stand instead of the tree of immortality, and yet that tree was not instituted to effect for the innocent what he hath now effected for sinners; because then the substitution would be destroyed, and the ideas conveyed by the one or the other would be false. The tree of lives therefore was, and was known to be, because the Holy Spirit expressly declares it to have been, a sacrament of immortality; so that he hath not only revealed that the soul is immortal, but hath also revealed what was instituted to be the pledge and earnest of eternal life. And in both these passages he hath, as plainly as words can speak, expressly revealed a future state.

And though these texts be not contained in (what is called) the body of the law, yet are they nevertheless conclusive; because every Jew who read the one of them, must know that he had an immortal soul; and because, though he read that the first sacrament of immortality was forfeited, yet he could not avoid reading in the law itself, that there was another instituted: for the law taught him, not only by expressive actions, but also by the plainest words, though he was a sinner, yet there was a way still open for him to future happiness; particularly, in the following passage he was taught this literally, and without a figure: God prohibits the eating of blood upon the penalty of death; and he gives a reason for the prohibition—"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. xvii. 11.) Now, if we take the word here rendered "soul" to denote the spiritual part of man, this would be a self-evident proof, that sacrifices were known to have a spiritual effect, and as such the atonement they made to regard a future life. But if we take the

* Capelli Comm p. 320.

word to denote what is always used in scripture to signify the animal frame, in what sense could the blood make an atonement for it? The end of making an atonement is to protect and secure a criminal from justice; and when this atonement is accepted, justice is satisfied. Now the present life was known to have been forfeited by sin, and how then could the Jews be so slow of heart as to imagine that this blood was to atone for the temporal life of the body? Blood could not possibly have any such virtue of its own; and it was daily demonstrated that it had no such virtue imputed to it: "For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, because all have sinned." And surely two thousand years' experience had sufficiently convinced the Jews of this truth, and demonstrated to them, that they were all to go down to the grave, and that the pit was to shut its mouth upon them. Against this demonstration, then, they could never imagine that blood was to atone for the temporal life of the body; and therefore they had a demonstration that there was some other life forfeited, besides the present, for which blood was to atone.

Now Moses* had taught them, in this text and elsewhere, to look upon sacrifice in a spiritual sense—that spiritual sense was the relation it bore to a Redeemer—and the blessings derived to mankind by that Redeemer were not temporal. However, an exemption from temporal death was not one of these blessings; and yet the blood which was known to typify the blood of the Redeemer, did preserve the body from some kind of death; which, being not from temporal, must of necessity be from eternal death: for, if only the present life had been forfeited by sin, the debt was always paid; and why then was not justice satisfied, but when this punishment was sure to be inflicted, it still required a further atonement? And as this atonement reached further than the present life, of necessity there was another life, which was forfeited, and for which the atonement to divine justice was made.

And can there be a plainer description of a future state than this? when the offerer, who hath by sin forfeited all title to life, brings his sacrifice before the Lord with hopes that some more perfect sacrifice would restore him to life; and with these hopes sheds the blood of the creature. This blood God absolutely forbids him to eat; and the reason of the prohibition is thus expressed—"I have instituted sacrifice to be a type of the Redeemer—the blood in which is the life of the flesh to be a type of his precious blood; which he will shed to redeem the life of man; and upon that account I have set apart blood for this use—† it is to be put upon the altar to represent his blood who is to make the real atonement for your life: for all the creatures in the whole earth are mine, and their blood can have no merit with me—the blood of the Redeemer alone can make an atonement for the life of man; and that life for which his blood is to atone, cannot be present—You will all be gathered to your fathers and see corruption; and therefore his blood is to atone for your future life; and as the benefits promised you through him are spiritual, you will then feel the effects of his atonement, when your bodies shall be raised from the dead; and ye who have believed and obeyed me, shall by virtue of his atonement be entitled to eternal life."

And this construction, it was proved, the words admit of; and it could not be mistaken by the Jews, because they could never imagine that the blood was to atone for temporal life; and therefore they did know from this text, in which it is so expressly and intelligibly revealed, that man will exist in a future state.

I shall select but one passage more from the body of the law, the meaning of which is so remarkably clear and obvious, that whoever cannot here see the doctrine of a future state, must indeed put a veil over his face in reading the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit, in reciting what God had done for his people, thus explains the intent of some of the miracles: "The Lord thy God humbled thee,

* Exod. xxiv. 8, proved by St. Paul, Heb. ix. 20, 21, &c. to signify the blood of Christ. § B. Lamy de Tabernaculo Fœd. Par. 1720, p 475.

† Critici Sacri, Lon. 1660, p. 817. Sam. Clark, A. M. Annotations on the Old and New Testaments, 1690, Note on Lev. xvii. 11. It is the blood, *viz.* of the sacrifice sacramentally and typically, and of Christ that makes atonement really. Rom. iii. 25. Col. i. 20. Heb. ix. 12. and Willet's 2nd vol. Hexapla on Lev. p. 409. § H. Maius de Æcon. Temp. Vet. Test. p. 387.

and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna (which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know) that he might make thee know, that man* doth not live by bread only, but by every [word] that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Deut. viii. 3. And it is afterwards added—"who fed thee with manna, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end." Deut. viii. 16. In these words the Holy Spirit declares, "God had made the Jews know that they could not subsist upon temporal support"—that as they consisted of two parts, they could not live by bread only, but must have some support for the spiritual life of the soul as well as the body: for though he had delivered them from Egypt "by signs and wonders, and a stretched-out arm," and had miraculously fed them in the wilderness with the bread of heaven; yet this temporal deliverance and support were not what man chiefly wanted, or what was to be his sole subsistence. Whilst the Almighty "opened the doors of heaven, and rained down meat upon them to the full," at the same time he told them, this was not the support they were to live by; for they were not to rest on the outside, and feed on the husks of his manifestations. God had regard to the soul in all that he did for the Jews; but the natural effects of bread cannot reach the soul: which requires some other than temporal support. But what then is the support required? for if God made them know what they could not live by, certainly he also made them know by what man doth live. "Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord shall man live." Therefore, whatever be the meaning of "proceeding out of the mouth of the Lord," this doubtless was what man was to live by. Now, after sin had entered into the world, and mankind became subject to temporal and eternal death, Christ, by the all-sufficient satisfaction he paid to the divine justice, redeemed them from eternal death, and thereby became the sole fountain of spiritual and everlasting life. And the words directly relate to him, under the character of the giver of life; for "all that proceeds from the mouth of Jehovah," is an expression used for the perfect manifestation of God in the flesh. It is used in this sense in the Old Testament (Deut. i. 26. § vii. 9. Jos. ix. 14. 1 Sam. xii. 14, 15. Is. lxii. 2.) and is so explained by Christ in the New: for when he is treating of the same subject, (*viz.* manna,) he uses a parallel expression, and calls himself the true bread of life, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world: and more directly he says of himself (John viii. 42.) "I proceeded forth, and came from God;" and besides, his application of the words to the tempter, in Mat. iv. 4, Luke iv. 4, demonstrates, that they are significative of the divinity that was in him, and of that spiritual life which flowed from thence.

In this passage, therefore, the Holy Spirit hath expressly revealed—that the Jews were taught not to rest upon the types—God, he says, intended that they should, nay, he wrought miracles in order that they might look beyond them: for he taught them, that man could not subsist upon bread only—his soul required some subsistence as well as his body—and that the types rested in could not give; there being no other fountain of spiritual life but what flowed from a person of the Deity, who in the fulness of time was made flesh, and gave everlasting life unto the world.

And this interpretation doth not rest solely on the direct meaning of the words, though this indeed would be sufficient for conviction; but there is also another authority, the meaning of the words settled by that very person of the Deity, whose coming they foretold: for, upon the Jews telling Christ, John vi. 31, &c. "their fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven"—Jesus answers "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the bread of life."

* The future tense, "Man shall not live by bread only." But bread will support the present life; therefore there is a life which bread will not support, and that life must of necessity be either a spiritual or a future life, either of which proves the truth of what I am now contending for, *viz.* that this text is a demonstration that Moses hath expressly mentioned a future state.

Now, as Jesus' answer, and what the Jews questioned him about, must relate to the same subject; so the truths which they establish are these: 1. That manna was a type of Christ; because by it God taught the Jews, that they wanted some principle of spiritual life, and there is no other but Christ; because our Saviour proves, that he had in him all the real effects which were attributed to manna as a type; and also because he calls himself the true bread; which word is used to denote the real, the very thing or person typified, the antitype, in opposition to the type, or what was a sign of that person or thing. 2. And it was known to be a type of Christ, because God made the Jews know what was the principle of spiritual life; and as he did this by giving them manna, then they did know that it was a type of Christ. 3. And this also proves, that they knew what was meant by "proceeding from the mouth of Jehovah."—For if manna was typical of Christ the giver of life—and known by the Jews to be typical—and known from this expression: and when our Saviour, speaking of his being the true bread of life in opposition to manna, says, "that he came down from heaven, came from the Father to give life to the world;" then these words of the New Testament must be of the same import with those of the Old: for in both they are used upon the same subject, to describe the same person, considered in the same respect, as the giver of life, and therefore this is a proof from the reason of the thing, that the meaning of the words was before faithfully rendered; and the conclusion from them, as they stand now explained, is this:

Moses lays down a proposition, and positively asserts, that God had made the Jews understand it—Christ explains this proposition, and shows how it ought to be understood.—Now he could not explain it in a different sense from what the Jews understood it in, because God made the Jews understand it in a spiritual sense, and in that sense Christ explained it; and therefore it is evident, from the testimony of two infallible witnesses, that the Jews knew Christ was to come down from heaven, and give spiritual life unto the world. And this is an express and a literal proof, that the doctrine of a future state was contained in, and was known to be contained in, the writings of Moses.

From the authority of these few texts, which have been at present considered, there is sufficient reason to conclude, that the doctrine of a future state is expressly mentioned in the writings of Moses. I pass on therefore to the second thing asserted, which indeed hath been in part already proved: for when God revealed a future state to the Jews, and the conditions upon which they were to be entitled to happiness in that state, certainly every Jew who desired and aimed at happiness, was laid under an indispensable obligation to observe the conditions, as the sole means to attain it; and that happiness, which laid him under this obligation, was an enforcement to observe the conditions—and an enforcement to observance is what properly constitutes a sanction.

II. But not to insist upon this—I proceed more particularly to prove, "That the obligation to observe every law, rite, and ceremony is enforced by Moses upon the sanctions of future rewards and punishments."

Now, in reading the books of Moses, it cannot but be observed, that there is one sanction which runs throughout the body of the law; and there is no ceremony, not the most minute rite, but what is enforced upon that sanction: to a great part of the laws it is particularly added, and not to all of them in general, that the obligation to do this, or avoid that, was founded upon the Lord's being their God. The Jews are required in particular to keep the * ten commandments, the passover †, the jubilee, the feasts, and all the other weightier matters of the law, because the Lord was their God; and upon the same sanction they are required in general to keep ‡ ALL the commandments, and ALL the statutes, to do ALL the judgments, and walk therein. This is so frequently insisted upon, that there can be no doubt of its being the sanction of all the Mosaic laws. The only inquiry then is, what is the meaning of this sanction? under what

* Exod. xx. 2. § Deut. v. 6. § J. H. Maius de Æconomiâ Vet. Test. p. 415.
† Lev. xxiii. 43. § xxv. 17.
‡ Lev. xi. 44. § xviii. 3, 4. § xx. 7. Numb. xv. 40, 41. § Deut. iv. 34—41. § xxvi. 16, 17. § xxviii. 58. § 2 Chron. xx. 20.

character is God here to be considered? or what is the ground of obligation? Doth God's claiming obedience of the Jews, because he Jehovah was their God, relate to some temporal character which God supported among the Jews, and to the temporal rewards and punishments which he under that character distributed? or is this properly, and in its primary sense, the sanction of future? Future rewards and punishments will appear to be what God intended, and what the Jews understood, for the following reasons—

1. And the first is, That the word Jehovah is not supposed to carry in it any sense of relation; and yet some relation is certainly implied in this sanction. As it denotes that essence which hath existence and all perfections in and of itself, it hath no respect to mankind either as created or redeemed. The essence, indeed, and the persons in it, respect us in both these relations, but then there are other words to describe them; and Jehovah is never used in scripture and it cannot be used, because the idea of the word is absolute, with relative pronouns, as it might be if the word expressed either of these relations. It is a term of distinction, signifying the different manner in which the divine essence exists from all other essences. Now, a term used to distinguish God from other beings and things, cannot be descriptive of the relation he stood in to the Jews under the theocracy: for a term which doth not imply in it any relation, cannot be used in a relative sense; and therefore it is not expressive of God as head of the Jewish state, nor consequently of the temporal sanctions, which he as head of that state was engaged to execute.

2. And besides, the sanction now mentioned is not thus worded, "I demand your obedience, because I am Jehovah: but, because I Jehovah am your God:" so the obligation arises from, and is enforced upon, that relation, in which Jehovah was to be considered. He was to be considered under the character of their God, and upon that account obeyed; and therefore the sanction is expressed in that term of relation, and not in the word Jehovah.

3. And though the word God (or Elohim) be certainly a term of relation, as the * relative pronouns frequently joined with it demonstrate, and must therefore express some beneficent character which God supports, yet it cannot possibly be that relation which he stood in to the Jews under the theocracy: for if the word stands for this relation, how can he in that sense be said to be the God or Elohim of the whole earth? (Isa. liv. 5.) The God of the whole earth could not be a local tutelary Deity: for that would be a contradiction in terms—what is local being limited and confined, and what is limited and confined being not universal: so that as theocracy was a form of government peculiar to the Jews, if this term of relation respected God as head of that government, how could it be applied to him in a universal sense? None of the nations were under such a government, and yet all the nations stood in that relation to God (whatever relation it be) which this word expresses; and therefore the word cannot be solely applied to the character which God sustained under the theocracy, or any relation in which God was to be considered as head of that particular form of government: and by consequence we shall not come at the true idea of the word, unless we consider the God of the whole earth under some other relation than that of a local tutelary Deity.

4. And besides, how could a word, used from the foundation of the world, carrying in it the idea of a universal relation, denote a particular one, which did not exist till after two thousand years? From the beginning, the Deity was known and worshipped under this name; and after the theocracy ceased, it was still his appellation as well as before, (1 Sam. viii. 7, &c.) It cannot then carry in it any particular designation of God's being placed at the head of the Jewish commonwealth, because it is not appropriated to him in that respect; and therefore, whatever sanctions it includes, they certainly were not those temporal sanctions which were solely appropriated to the theocratic government, and which God was then engaged to execute.

5. And farther, it cannot be used to express that relation in which God stood to the Jews as their deliverer from Egypt, because the nations who had received no

* My—thy—our—your—their Elohim, &c.

such deliverance, did yet worship God under this name; and because the heads of the Jewish people, though not related in this sense, did yet call Jehovah their God: nay, even before it was foretold that their seed should go down into Egypt, and should be brought into bondage; but should be delivered by signs and wonders, and a stretched-out arm: even before this was revealed, the patriarchs knew and worshipped God under this relation; and therefore it cannot be the particular designation of God considered as the deliverer of the Jews from Egypt, or as their Redeemer from the house of bondage.

6. And in the next place, as the word God or Elohim is certainly expressive of some beneficent relation in which God stands to all his creatures; so must it, therefore, denote either the universal relation he stands in to them as their Creator, or Redeemer: for, under these two, all the relations he stands in to mankind in general are included. As to the character of Governor of the world, that since the fall could not have been a beneficent relation to sinners without a Redeemer; and yet the relation expressed by the word Elohim is indisputably a beneficent one. And, besides, the same person is now both the Redeemer and Governor of the world: "all power in heaven and earth being committed to Christ;" and therefore that relation, which is but a consequence of redemption, ought not, and indeed cannot, be considered separately from it. And as to the universal character God sustains as Creator, the word cannot be descriptive of this relation: for as a verb or a noun, it is never used in any such sense; and there is but one word used throughout the scriptures to denote the single and omnipotent act of creation; and, also, because it is used as a name of God in the participle passive where it cannot be applied to him in the sense of creation; for it would be blasphemy to say of God, it undeifies him to say, "He who was created." It is manifest then, from the reason of the thing, that the word carries in it some idea of God considered as our Redeemer, and is expressive of that universal and * most beneficent relation.

7. Now, it is the belief of every Christian, that the Deity foresaw the fall of man; and, before it happened, had provided a suitable remedy. This remedy was the redemption purchased by Christ; and the scriptures have represented each person of the Deity as covenanting to perform a certain part in the economy of that redemption. God the Father is here represented as demanding satisfaction for sin, and covenanting, upon a full satisfaction made, to pardon sinners: God the Son, as covenanting to make that full satisfaction to the Father, and thereby redeem mankind: and God the Holy Ghost, as covenanting to make that satisfaction effectual to the ends proposed, as sanctifying believers. That the ever-blessed Trinity did make this covenant, and actually have performed it, is the foundation of our faith and hopes; and that fallen man might never want evidence for these truths, and might therefore always have powerful motives to make proper returns of love and obedience, the Divine Persons were mercifully pleased to represent themselves to sinners under the idea of persons who had made such a covenant to redeem them; which idea the word Elohim conveys. For,

8. The term † (Elah), in human affairs, is certainly used to express that conditional penalty which they who have entered into a covenant upon oath have laid themselves under. And why may not this be the idea in divine affairs? There is no other word in the language but this from whence it can be derived; and if this be its certain derivation, then it must have the same idea as the word from whence it is derived: for it is an invariable rule in the sacred language, that all words of the same letters, and consequently of the same root, must have the same idea. So that, if entering into such a covenant be an action which we can predicate of God, then the divine name may, without offence, allude to that covenant. Now the scriptures frequently predicate this action of God: he is said to "swear by himself," Gen. xxii. 16. "To have sworn to Abraham; and to have made an oath unto Isaac, that in their seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," 1 Chron. xvi. 16. And if, without derogating from the

* Deut. vii. 9. Psal. lxii. 1, 6, 7, 8. § lxxxv. 5. § xlii. 6. § xcviii. 3. Isa. lii. 10. In these and many other places, salvation is manifestly included in the word Elohim.

† Gen. xxiv. 41. § xxvi. 28. Deut. xxix. 13, 18, 20

divine perfections, he made this oath concerning Christ the universal blessing to these particular persons, why might not the same be made for the general good of all men? But it was made to particulars, to induce a full trust and reliance on what God had sworn to perform; and with the same view God made it unto all men: "For, being willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel (to redeem man) he confirmed it by an oath, that man might have two immutable things to trust to, in either of which it was impossible for God to lie," Heb. vi. 17, 18. This is a proof that the action implies no imperfection in it, and therefore the name implies none. "It is impossible God should lie." This is an imperfection he cannot be liable to: but why, then, have the scriptures so worded the manner of the Divine Persons entering into the Christian covenant? St. Paul says they so worded it to "give man the strongest assurance of the immutability of God's counsel to redeem him." This was the reason why they represented themselves as entering into such a covenant, and as assuming the name from thence of persons who had laid themselves under an obligation to perform it. And, therefore, as the word Elah is expressive of a certain action, and as the Elohim are represented in scripture to be the agents or doers of that action, certainly it can be no diminution of the divine perfections, for God to be called by a name expressive of that action, for the name only expresses, what all the scriptures bear witness of, that he had done. And as the action was an instance of the greatest mercy which God could show to his fallen creatures, surely that mercy was heightened by revealing himself to them under that merciful name.

It being, then, consistent with the divine perfections to enter into a covenant, and be under an obligation to the performance of it; and there being but one verb in the language from whence the word Elohim can be derived, and the certain meaning of that verb being, to lie under the obligation of an oath to the performance of some covenant; therefore it is evident, this is the idea of the word: and that the covenant which it expresses, was the gospel-covenant is manifest, from the reason of the thing, which proved the relation expressed by this word, could be no other but that of redemption;* and from the usage of the word in scripture, where it is frequently confined to this sense;† and from there being no mention in scripture, that any other but the gospel-covenant was revealed since the fall of man: and, therefore, when the word is applied to the persons of the divine essence, it represents them as under an obligation, which they voluntarily entered into, to perform the gospel-covenant, and save their fallen, depraved creatures; and, upon this sense of the word, the sanctions of temporal rewards and punishments could be established: for, when God promulges his laws, and requires obedience of the Jews upon this sanction, because I, Jehovah, am your God, the obligation expressed in these words is this:

"That system of laws which I have given you, ye are to remember to keep and obey; for your all depends upon your obedience: it is obedience which secures you of my protection here. But what the system of laws I have now given you chiefly aims at is, my protection hereafter; and, therefore, in order to gain your obedience, I have enforced my laws upon this stronger sanction—I have made your title to the benefits of redemption depend on your believing and obeying what I have required. You are convinced that the persons of the divine essence have covenanted to redeem you from sin and death: this they cannot do for you here. These spiritual benefits of redemption must be conferred in a future state; and you will not receive any of these benefits in that state, unless you believe, and do in this, what I have required."

9. And this interpretation, which is drawn from the reason of the thing and the express meaning of the words, is fully justified by Christ's argument in the text. Our Saviour there asserts, that the term Elohim (for this is the word in

* Psalm lxxviii. 22. Isa. xlv. 21. Hos. xiii. 4. § vi. 6. Judges x. 14. Jer. ii. 28.

† To save, to redeem, deliver, being generally attributed to the Elohim, Psalm iii. 3, "many say of my soul, there is no salvation for it in the Elohim, Selah," mind this. Heb. xi. 16, "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, because he hath prepared for them an (heavenly) city." Here the reason given why God called himself their God, demonstrates that the word Elohim relates to, and is expressive of, the gospel-covenant.

the text he quotes, Exod. iii. 6,) is a term of relation; and it is expressive of some beneficent relation, because he says it respects God, "not the God of the dead, but as the God of the living." Now the living, whom this word respects, cannot be the persons who live in the present world, because God still stood in that beneficent relation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when they were dead; from whence our Saviour infers, that the covenant expressed by this word, and the blessings flowing from it, must respect a future life; for if, in consequence of this covenant, the bodies of these patriarchs were to be raised from the dead, then the covenant must relate to a future life. But in consequence of this covenant, the bodies of these patriarchs were to be raised from the dead, because God is not the God (the Elohim) of the dead, but of the living; and, consequently, as the covenant relates to the resurrection of the dead, so must the sanction founded upon that covenant.

But since our Saviour hath produced an authority from Moses, to prove that he taught the resurrection of the dead, upon which very authority Moses hath enforced the sanctions of all his laws; this, therefore, being such an infallible proof, what these sanctions were, demands a more particular consideration; and the state of the case is this:

The Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection, come to Christ; they propose a difficulty to him from the law of Moses, which they could not solve upon the supposition of a resurrection, and they desire that Christ, who preached the doctrine of the resurrection, and said he came to fulfil the law of Moses, would reconcile this difficulty with that doctrine. Christ's answer consists of two parts: first, a solution of the difficulty; and then a proof, that the difficulty they proposed was founded on a great error, *viz.* that Moses had not treated of the resurrection of the dead; and this proof he introduces in a very remarkable manner. "Ye Sadducees deny that there is any resurrection; but concerning the resurrection of the dead, that they rise," I can give you a satisfactory proof out of your own prophet: "for have ye not read in the book of Moses, and hath not he showed you, that the dead are to be raised, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? For he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; ye, therefore, do greatly err." And the sacred historian remarks upon this answer, "that when the multitude heard it, they were astonished at his doctrine; and that the Sadducees, the deniers of the resurrection, were put to silence."

From this fair and impartial state of the case, then, it is evident, that Christ did intend to prove from the text he quotes, that Moses had treated of the resurrection of the dead. The difficulty which the Sadducees proposed, was an objection against the resurrection; and as Christ's answer cannot but be to the purpose, it must be an argument for the truth of this doctrine. Now the exordium to this proof sets forth, that the resurrection was taught in the book of Moses—the proof is a text from that book of Moses, wherein it was taught—and therefore the exordium must directly refer to this proof, and nothing else.* And what can be a direct introduction to a proof, if this be not? Have ye not read concerning the resurrection of the dead in the book of Moses? And then immediately follows the proof which they might have read concerning the resurrection. Can any words more plainly declare, that the resurrection of the dead was taught in the books of Moses, and that this particular text was a proof of it?

But if the design of Christ's argument was to prove, that Moses had showed the dead were to be raised, wherein lies the conclusiveness of it? To be the God or Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it was before proved, was to stand related to them under the character of Redeemer, and particularly to be under a covenant to redeem them from sin and death; for redemption could not regard fallen man in any other respect than as a sinner, and as liable to the punishment of sin. Now it was impossible that God, who had represented himself to them, as under a covenant, should lie; and yet all these patriarchs suffered death, the

* Corn. a Lapide, Lugd. 1638, 1 vol. p. 409, 410. † Dr. Stanhope's Ep. & Gosp. 3rd vol. p. 425. "The force of this argument there is no room to doubt, after our blessed Lord himself hath made use of it to confute the Sadducees' error, and to prove a resurrection."

punishment of sin: and whilst their bodies continued in the grave, they had not received the benefit of God's being under such a covenant, because by that covenant man was to be redeemed from sin and death; but whilst death reigned over the patriarchs, they had not received that redemption: and therefore, since that redemption was not effected and completed in this world, of necessity there must be another world, in which their bodies will be raised to life and immortality. *

And besides, even when these patriarchs were dead, God still stood in that beneficent relation to them which the word Elohim expresses. Now that beneficent relation doth not respect mankind as dead, but as living: God is not the God of the dead—He is not the Elohim of those who are to lie for ever under the power of death—He cannot be said to stand in any beneficent relation to them; for a beneficent relation regards them who are sensible of God; but they cannot be sensible of it over whom death reigneth for ever. The living, the living only, are sensible of good, and God is the God of the living; and yet, if the patriarchs be dead for ever, he cannot be the God of the living. Whilst their bodies continue in the grave, they are dead: but he hath covenanted not to be the God of the dead; their bodies therefore must rise from the dead before be can fulfil the gospel covenant—He must raise them up into a future life, before be can be what his name Elohim imports: for he cannot act up to, and complete, that beneficent relation which he stands in to them, until their bodies be raised from the dead. Then shall they be of the number of those happy living, who will praise him indeed, when feeling the blessed effects of that beneficent relation, they shall have a conviction from sense, which we now can have only from faith—that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Christ, then, who is an infallible interpreter of Moses, asserts, that Moses hath treated of the resurrection of the dead; he brings an argument from Moses to prove it. The argument is—God says unto Moses, that he was nevertheless the Elohim of Ahraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though they were dead—being their Elohim even, then, Christ declares, is a proof that he still stood in some beneficent relation to them. But he could not stand in any beneficent relation to those who were dead for ever, because he is not the God of the dead; therefore that beneficent relation regards them as living, and they cannot be living till raised from the dead. Now all the laws of Moses are enforced upon this sanction, Ye shall obey me, because I Jehovah am your Elohim; and Christ hath purposely demonstrated, that the resurrection of the dead is a part of this sanction: consequently, I infer from the infallible interpretation of Jesus Christ—that the obligation to observe every law, rite, and ceremony is enforced under the Mosaic dispensation, upon the sanctions of future rewards and punishments.

And though this conclusion be drawn from the express meaning of Moses' words, and that meaning be confirmed by the unanswerable authority of Christ, either of which would be abundantly sufficient to evince what were the Mosaic sanctions; yet I shall add to them another passage, wherein it is expressly and literally asserted, not only that future rewards and punishments were the sanctions of the whole law; but also that God had taught the Jews, and they knew—that his laws were established upon these sanctions. And the passage is this—

"For this commandment, which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off." Deut. xxx. 11. So that whatever be the meaning of this commandment, the Jews did understand it: if it was not hidden from, of necessity it must be known unto, them; for not to hide is to discover, and to discover is to know. Now St. Paul, speaking by the same Spirit which spake in Moses, says, that this commandment, the meaning of which the Jews knew, treats of Justification by faith in Christ. The words themselves indeed do clearly and fully describe that justification; but since an infallible interpreter hath explained them, and Moses hath declared that the Jews understood them in the sense thus explained, the argument therefore will be equally conclusive, without particularly proving what is the sense of the words from the text itself; for the Jews did certainly understand them in the true sense, and St. Paul could not ex-

* Th. Cartwright, Harmonia Evang. Lugd 1647, p. 799. || F. Illyrici Gloss. in Quat. Evang Basle, 1570, p. 97.

plain them in any other. And his interpretation is this; "When Moses speaketh on this wise, concerning the justification which is of faith, say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven?" Deut. xxx. 12. St. Paul say, the Jews knew that this meant to bring Christ from above. Rom. x. 16. And when Moses says, "Who shall descend into the deep, and bring the word unto us, that we may hear it and do it?" the apostle declares the Jews knew that this meant to bring up Christ again from the dead. And when Moses tells the Jews, "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart;" the apostle asserts they hereby understood, that same word of faith which he preached. St. Paul then hath informed us what the Jews understood—they knew that Christ was to come down from heaven—was to die—and rise again from the dead—and they also knew that word of faith which the apostle preached, *viz.* "That if they should confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe that God would raise him from the dead, they should be saved."

And after Moses hath thus revealed that man is to be justified by faith in Christ, he proceeds to show what was the consequence of his revealing this doctrine; and it followed from thence, that he had thereby offered to, and set before, the believing Jews, the means to a happy immortality; and to the unbelieving, death. "See," says he, "I have set before thee this day, lives and good, and death and evil." Deut. xxx. 15. The word "lives," it was before proved, was, in its literal and primary sense, expressive of a future life and immortality; and the reason of the thing here demonstrates, that this is the sense of the word: for the life which Moses in this text set before them, could not be a temporal one—it was such a life as should flow from their being justified—but by being accounted just and righteous in the sight of God through the merits of Christ, they could not thereupon be entitled to temporal rewards. All the blessings derived to mankind from Christ are of a spiritual nature; and justification by him being spiritual, cannot regard the present life; for the present life was forfeited by sin; and if men were to be accounted just and righteous before God through the merits of Christ, with respect to the present life, then the present life ought not to be taken away from them who are so justified. But length of days is found to be no consequence of justification. We are all in a constant succession removed from off the stage of the world; and how then can our justification in any sense respect the present life, since the virtue flowing from it cannot be received till we have passed through the grave and gate of death? It is evident, then, from the reason of the thing, as well as from the meaning of the words, that the lives Moses here set before the Jews, included a future and immortal life: for that is the consequence of justification. And as the sense of the text was not hidden from them, it follows, they knew they were to be justified before God through faith in Christ, in order to their obtaining a happy immortality.

And that this immortality was the sanction upon which Moses enforced obedience to all his laws, is evident from the following verse—* "See," says he, "I have set before thee this day a future life of happiness and misery; in that I command thee to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments," Deut. xxx. 16. Now, under the expressions of walking in the ways of God and keeping his commandments, statutes, and judgments, are included all the rites and services of the law: and by commanding the Jews to keep these rites and services, Moses says he had set before them a future life of happiness and misery; and if he commanded them to keep the law, and to them who kept it he offered future happiness, then this future happiness was proposed to them as a motive to obedience, and whatever was proposed to them as a motive to obey the law was of necessity a sanction to enforce that obedience; because, so far as it was a motive, it obliged—and obligation is what constitutes a sanction. And, therefore, as Moses had taught the Jews (in the words before) that they were to be justified by faith in Christ, and that a happy immortality was the consequence of this justification: so he here makes obedience to the whole law an absolutely necessary condition to attain that immortality; and thereby he makes the immortality,

* 2 Esd. vii. 59, asserts that the life Moses mentions in this verse, was an immortal one.

which was consequent on justification, the sanction upon which he enforces obedience; and of course he gives us further reason to conclude, that the obligation to observe every law, rite, and ceremony, is enforced under the Mosaic dispensation, upon the sanctions of future rewards and punishments.

These indeed are but a small number of those texts from whence this conclusion might be supported; but, however, these will be sufficient at present, because if a future state, and future rewards and punishments be taught in those now produced, then the two propositions at first laid down are fully justified; and nothing remains but to give a general view of the subject, and to show how it ought to have been treated, and how it came to be misunderstood. And the texts already and hereafter to be cited upon this subject, will have their due weight when it is observed, that the law by Moses, and the gospel by Christ, are but two parts of one and the same dispensation; the gospel-covenant runs through and constitutes the essence of both: for since the fall of Adam that covenant was the same to Christ, and from him it will be the same to the end of the world—"There was never any other name given among men, whereby sinners might be saved, but that of Jesus Christ." Now the promises annexed to the gospel-covenant, as such, were always the same; for that covenant regarded men as sinners. It promised them remission of sins. The benefit of having their sins remitted is not a temporal one—because sins are therefore remitted, that sinners may escape the punishment which was their due; but under the gospel-covenant, as such, the punishment due to sinners is not inflicted in this world; for remission of sins through a mediator, and the divine favour, and a title to happiness, are the privileges of the gospel-covenant; and all these privileges are of a spiritual nature, and regard sinners not merely as living in this world, but as candidates for another. And these privileges of the gospel-covenant are delivered by Moses in the Old Testament, as well as by Christ in the New: for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to sinners by Jesus Christ. Indeed, this gospel-covenant was administered in a different manner before our Saviour came, from what it hath been since; and it is for want of attending to what would of necessity follow from such different administration, that the end and meaning of the Mosaic law hath been so greatly mistaken: for if men had well understood the reasons of that different administration, they could never have fallen into these two dangerous errors, which laid the foundation of an opinion, that Moses had not treated of future rewards and punishments. And the

1. First error arose from mistaking the end and significancy of the types. Now a type is an outward and visible sign, instituted by God to represent some spiritual person or object. That the outward and visible sign was instituted to this end, is evident from hence, that the gospel-covenant was revealed upon the fall, and the types were instituted at the same time, to create and preserve faith and hopes in what was promised by that covenant. The time of their institution appears from Abel's offering sacrifice; and the end of their institution from his offering through faith in Christ. Now faith in Christ being a qualification for receiving the benefits of the gospel-covenant, and sacrifice being the typical rite by which Abel expressed that faith, this typical rite therefore must have been instituted to this end, because without such institution it was contrary to all principles of reason, that there should be any connexion between the ideas of faith in Christ and sacrifice. This typical rite, then, which is the sum and substance of the law, and which with the sacrificial rites makes up a great part of it, was instituted upon the fall along with the gospel-covenant. And it appears from this one instance (to omit others) for what end the types were instituted. Now, if the end of instituting them was to preserve faith and hopes in what the gospel-covenant promised, then they must have been significant of what was promised. To be able to preserve faith and hopes is not the attribute of an insignificant rite; before it could be able to do this, it must have spoken an intelligible language: for when God revealed to fallen man the promise of life and immortality, and instituted an outward action to keep in mind what he had promised, certainly that action was expressive of this promise; and what it expressed was as well understood by the Jews, who knew the gospel-covenant, as it is by us;

for the whole of this covenant is spiritual; and wherever the covenant was known, there it was also certainly known that the types were spiritual, because the covenant was always a sure key to decypher the types. And why then might not a sacrifice speak the same thing as intelligibly to a Jew, as the holy communion doth to a Christian? Since, though the one looked forward to what should be done, and the other looks backward to what hath been done, yet they both regard the same part of the gospel-covenant—the death and satisfaction of Christ.

This, then, was the end and significancy of the types. The gospel-covenant was revealed upon the fall, and the types were then instituted, to the end that they might preserve faith and hopes in what was promised by that covenant: the immortality which fallen man had forfeited, was therein promised to be restored him through a Redeemer; and the infinite wisdom of God so contrived the types as they might in the most intelligible manner (that material objects can describe spiritual) signify the Redeemer, and immortality through him. And as this gospel-covenant was always known to some believers; from hence therefore it is certain, that at all times, from the first institution of the types till their complction by Christ, believers understood the types in a spiritual sense, and knew that they related to the Redeemer and immortality through him, which were promised by the gospel-covenant.

2. And from mistaking the end and significancy of the types, a second error took its rise, *viz.* "That because the types could not give, therefore they did not teach eternal life;" which error hath been already exploded: for the law was founded upon the gospel-covenant, and the types were instituted to teach men what was promised through him who was to fulfil that covenant; so that though the types of themselves could not save, yet the gospel-covenant certainly could, on which they were founded, and to which they referred. But then, before Christ came, the salvation to which men were entitled by that covenant, must of necessity have been differently worded from what it is since. Before he came, there could be no institution which could actually give or confer eternal life. It might indeed be offered and set before men; and it was; the types pointed at Christ, and through him to eternal life—but then Christ was the middle term, and without him there could be no possible connexion between the types and eternal life; therefore, before Christ came, eternal life could only be offered, set before, and promised to mankind. To give and to confer life is the attribute of our Redeemer; and when he came into the world, he assured his disciples and the Jews, "that he came down from heaven to give eternal life unto the world." Of necessity, then, the Old Testament must be worded different from the New in this respect. But nevertheless it will not follow, "that because eternal life is now given us by Christ, therefore it was not promised by Moses." It will rather follow, that the New Testament being the completion of the Old, whatever is fulfilled by the one, was promised under the other. And as eternal life was promised under the law by the gospel-covenant, then certainly that promise was a sufficient sanction to enforce obedience upon: for, before Christ had done and suffered what was foretold, the happiness promised through what he was to do and suffer, was then the strongest obligation to obedience; and so far as it was an obligation, it was also a sanction to enforce that obedience. Now the New Testament is very express, that eternal life was promised through Christ under the law—the articles and the homilies of our church assert the same—and texts have been now produced from Moses, wherein he secures obedience to his laws upon motives drawn from the gospel-covenant, and enforces it upon the sanctions of these rewards and punishments which that covenant offered; and therefore it can be no objection to these sanctions—that eternal life could not be had by the law, since it was promised under the law; and upon that promise of eternal life the sanctions of the Mosaic dispensation are established.

From the time of the fall, then, there hath been but one way open to heaven, and that was through Christ; and all believers, before and under the law, hoped for pardon of sin and salvation through him. In hopes of that pardon and salvation they observed the typical services. It was upon that account they believed and obeyed. And when God made faith and obedience absolutely necessary conditions to attain these ends, certainly he thereby made pardon of sin and sal-

vation the sanctions upon which he enforced faith and obedience. By the gospel-covenant therefore from Adam to Christ, the divine laws were established upon the sanctions of future rewards and punishments, and they will be the same from him to the end of the world; for the benefits of the gospel-covenant are such, as will induce all considerate men to believe and obey in hopes of receiving them. Whilst they go through this vale of misery, they will endure the cross for the joy that is set before them. Whilst they run their course, they will keep their eyes fixed on the prize of their high calling. Heb. xii. 2. And they will follow the example of the great apostle, who, because there was to be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, did for that reason exercise himself to keep a conscience void of offence, both towards God, and towards men. Acts xxiv. 15, 16.

NO JUSTIFICATION BY THE LAW OF NATURE,

PROVED FROM ROMANS ii. 14, 15;

IN

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR, THE ALDERMEN, AND CITIZENS OF LONDON, AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL, ON THE SECOND DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1741.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.—Romans ii. 14, 15.

THIS passage of scripture hath been generally misinterpreted. The apostle hath here been understood to favour certain opinions about the light and law of nature, as of themselves sufficient to discover and perform the terms of our justification: his words have been so represented as if he should say, that the Gentiles, who had no revealed law, could from the bare reasoning of their own minds, and from attending to the dictates of their own consciences, come at the knowledge of what state they were in, and what duties God required of persons in such a state; and that he should affirm in the words of the text, "That every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it." Now these opinions being destructive of the Christian faith, which acknowledges but one means of justification; being so much cried up and countenanced in the present times, wherein such religious paradoxes have but too many advocates; and being also so strongly espoused by the loose thinkers and actors (a numerous body in this metropolis) who maintain such opinions for the sake of their consequences. For those reasons the subject in the text will be every way proper for the present occasion; and, therefore, without further preface, I shall proceed to show the sense and meaning of the apostle's words. Now the state of the case was this. some of the Jews who had received the faith of Christ, were yet very zealous of the law, and the Mosaical rites; they had a strong opinion, that it was necessary still to observe them; and they maintained that the Gentile converts ought first to become proselytes of the Jewish covenant of circumcision, and submit to the whole law, before they could enjoy the benefits of the gospel.

To prevent the dangerous effects of this doctrine, is the chief end proposed in the epistle to the Romans, and in the words now read, the apostle particularly applies himself to the reasoning of those Jewish Christians, and proves that it was not necessary for the Gentile converts to submit to the whole law. "For," says he, "when the Gentiles," &c. And,

In order to show the force of the apostle's argument contained in these words, and to prove that they do not treat of the light or law of nature, it will be proper,

First, To define and settle the meaning of the terms here used. And then,

Secondly, To show that the meaning put upon them is founded on scripture, and matter of fact.

By Gentiles are here meant any persons who were not of the Jewish nation, and yet did the things contained in the law. And this

Law, which the Gentiles observed, was that same by which St. Paul says,* "The Jews knew the will of God. In which they rested, and of which they made their boast, out of which they were instructed, from which they learned to approve what was excellent, and by which, if they transgressed it, they were to be judged. Circumcision was a part of it. And the Jews by breaking it dishonoured God." From those passages which occur in this chapter, to omit others, it is evident that by the law is here meant, as in most other places of scripture, the written law of Moses: and indeed the generality of commentators, though greatly mistaken in the apostle's argument, do yet agree, that this is the law of which he speaks in the first part of the verse, and that he means no more by the Gentiles not having it, than their not having it in writing among them.

The Gentiles, then, who had not the law of Moses in writing, are said to do by nature the things contained in it. Nature cannot here mean the light of nature: for how could the light of nature lead the Gentiles to do the things contained in the law of Moses? It cannot signify the religion of nature, both because the things contained in that law,—*viz.* the necessity of our redemption by Christ, and purification by blood, make no part of this religion; and also because our naturalists have attempted to show, that the Mosaical rites are directly contrary to the nature of things. To do what was contained in the law by nature, was not to do it by any innate or implanted principles; for such we have none.—It is not by intuitive knowledge, for that we cannot have; or by knowledge without means, for that is the attribute of God alone. In none of these free-thinking senses can St. Paul use the word in the text: for he is not treating of the method by which the Gentiles came to the knowledge of the law, but their reason for observing it · he doth not say, they learned, but they did, by nature, the things of the law; so that nature was not that which discovered the action, but it was the motive to act; it was the authority upon which the Gentiles did, and not the faculty or power by which they learned, the things of the law. And this distinction shows, that the apostle neither means the light, nor the law of nature; but he uses the word, as indeed its derivation (from *φυω*, *nascor*, &c.) imports, for that which grows up with us, our frame and constitution, and such habit or custom is, even to a proverb: and in this sense it is always used either for nature, as the frame and constitution of any thing; or what by habit becomes such. And in this last sense (if it be a different sense) the apostle uses the word in the text. The Jews had indeed another authority, *viz.* the institution of Moses; but the other nations had only custom for it; that was their authority, (as it will hereafter appear,) they received the things contained in the law by a traditional account from their parents, and for that reason observed them. This then being the sense of the word, it is used with great propriety in the text; as it is also demonstratively true in fact that the Gentiles did observe from custom or habit (which is the second nature) the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law.

The apostle then says, that custom was the motive or reason by which the Gentiles did the things contained in the law of Moses; but how then were they, by doing those things, what he next declares they were, "a law unto themselves?"† Could they find within themselves the rule of right, and obligations to follow it?

* Rom. ii. 17, 18, 23, 25.

† Bishop Butler's Sermons, First and Second, on Rom. ii. 14, 15, page 32. "Every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it. This St. Paul affirms in the words of the text." Pelagius on Rom. ii. 14, 15, speaks of some sort of justice, which man could obtain by his own power, without the help of grace, only by following the light of nature. So Calmet and Whitby talk of the light of nature and conscience as a rule, and moral works as terms of justification. Not so St. Paul.

If they could, then they might find within themselves the terms upon which they, though sinners, were to be saved; and they who can discover those terms by a proper exercise of their intellectual faculties stand in no need at all of a revelation; so that this position will make the Christian revelation needless: for its very being depends upon the certainty of this truth, "That fallen man could not from any conclusions of his own reason, either discover or perform the terms upon which he might be saved." And is it not erasing the foundations of this truth, for a man to pretend that he hath a director within him, by which he, though a sinner (and who is not?) can find out the rule of right, and obligations to follow it, and can discover the terms of salvation without the assistance of what is revealed? All such pretences to inward light and self-sufficiency are mere enthusiasm: for such inward light is needless, if revelation be our guide; and if that inward light be our guide, revelation is needless. God doubtless would not give us two sufficient guides, because one of them must be given in vain; and therefore if God hath given us directions, if those directions are recorded in the scriptures, and if the scriptures be an outward rule, to which it is our duty to conform our thoughts and actions; from hence it is evident, that a law unto themselves can never mean, that mankind hath an inward rule of right within himself, and obligations to follow it.

But of what law is St. Paul here speaking? He hath three times before in this very verse used the word for the law of Moses; and is it not absurd to suppose he means any other law, when continuing to speak of the same persons considered in the very same respect, he says, "That the Gentiles, by doing the things contained in the law of Moses, were the law unto themselves?" Doth he not here plainly affirm, that they were the law of Moses unto themselves? But in what sense, then? It must be remembered, that the persons here treated of, did the things contained in the law of Moses; now, though they had not that law in writing, yet by doing the things contained therein, though their motive for doing them was different from that of the Jews, it was the same thing to themselves, as if they had the written law: for their customary observance was that authority to them, which the law of Moses was to the Jews. The Gentiles having not the institution of Moses, are yet an institution to themselves, and do themselves supply the place or defect of that institution; they are their own authority, or they are an authority to themselves—evidence against themselves that they were sinners—wanted redemption—and that blood was necessary to purify them, and make them fit for admission into the presence of God. So that these Gentiles, who had not the law of Moses written in letters, were the law to themselves, not by having the rule in themselves, but as they, by the customary observance of the Mosaic rites, answered the end of the written law, and did the same religious actions as the believing Jews, and with the same view, only their motives were different.

These Gentiles, then, who did the things contained in the law of Moses, thereby showed that the work of the law, that which the law was to work, and those effects which it was given to produce among the Jews, were written in their hearts.

To write in the heart is certainly a figurative expression: for nothing can in any other sense be written there, than by its making an impression, and being recorded there. Now what was written was what the law was to work, *viz.* "Belief in the necessity of our redemption by Christ, and purification by blood." And St. Paul says, the Gentiles observed those religious ceremonies, which showed they were convinced of these doctrines by nature; and surely the religion of nature could not convince them of these doctrines; they make no part of that religion: which is a further proof, that by nature cannot be meant the religion of nature in the text. For St. Paul is not showing how the Gentiles came to the knowledge of the doctrines, but what disposition of mind such persons must be in, who performed the typical services contained in the law? which performance, he says, showed, that they were convinced of the truth of the doctrines which those services were to exhibit. How they came to be written in the heart, he is not inquiring; he only asserts, that the Gentiles showed by their actions, that they were written there; they did the things contained in the law of Moses; they showed by doing them, that what these things were intended to work and effect,

was imprinted upon their minds. So that their showing that they had such an impression on their minds, is here mentioned as a consequence of certain actions. The impression did not lead them to do the actions, but the actions showed that there was such an impression. For as the heart is the spring of action, and as we act according to what is in our thoughts or in our hearts, so by doing the things contained in the law of Moses, the Gentiles showed, and that by the plainest proof which could be given, that what the law was to work, was to them a principle of action, and had made a deep impression upon their minds. Now this which was written in their hearts was the substance of what the law was to work, and not the religion of nature: it was not implanted or written there by innate ideas, because nothing was written but what had been revealed; and what occasion was there to reveal what was before innate? And how can any thing be inferred from hence in favour of any light or law of nature, which should contain truths written in the heart without a revelation, when the apostle is treating only of revealed truths, and the impression they had made upon the mind?

Of those Gentiles, then, who were doers of the law, St. Paul proceeds to declare, that their consciences bare them witness. "Now conscience is that act of the mind which compares the conformity or obliquity of our actions with some right rule." The rule in the present case is the law; for the Gentiles are here considered in no other light than as doers of it. And their thoughts or reasonings between this rule and their actions bare them witness, and led them to accuse those actions which erred from, and to excuse those which conformed to, this rule; and thereby, whilst this faculty was thus exercised on its proper rule, these ends which the law was to effect were answered among the Gentiles. They kept faith and a good conscience, and were to be justified before God in the day when he shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. So that conscience in this place being exercised about the law as a rule, and the actions of the Gentiles as conforming to, or erring from it, natural conscience therefore cannot be here meant: because the apostle is speaking only of what was revealed. The conscience was exercised about what the law was to work, and that made no part of the religion of nature; it was exercised only about revelation, therefore it cannot be inferred from hence, that it is any law of our nature to follow the dictates of our conscience without attending to what is revealed:* And what authority then is there from this text to prove the natural supremacy, or prerogative of conscience?—A revelation is made—the Gentiles (so far as they know it) consider it as a rule of action—by looking upon it in this light, they see that it is their duty to conform to it—and when they do, their conscience reflecting on the rule and the action approves what is done, and of course disapproves what doth not conform. Here is nothing said in this case about the natural supremacy of conscience, or about our judgments of right and wrong, without the knowledge of some revealed rule; and therefore it is certain, that the conscience here treated of, was exercised only about the things contained in the law of Moses as a revealed rule of action.

The apostle's argument, then, in the words of the text as they have been now explained, stands thus. A dangerous error had prevailed among the Jewish Christians: they held it to be necessary, that the Gentile converts should be circumcised, and submit to the whole law before they could enjoy the benefits of the gospel. The apostle strenuously opposes this error, and among other arguments uses this in the text to overthrow it. For, says he, when the Gentiles who have not the written law of Moses, do the same actions as the Jews, do the things contained in the law, and with the same view, only upon a different motive, the one by custom or habit, the other by the institution of Moses; these Gentiles, though they have not the law in writing among them, yet by doing the things contained in it, they are the law to themselves; supplying, so far as they do those things, the place of the written law, or the want of the Mosaic institution: being doers therefore of the law, they are as properly qualified to be admitted into the privileges of the gospel, as the Jews themselves who were its hearers; for as they showed by their actions, that what the Mosaic

* See Bishop Butler's First and Second Sermons, entitled "Upon the natural Supremacy of Conscience."

law was to work and effect was written in their hearts, and that they had that same right disposition of mind, which it was to work and effect in the Jews,* and for which the Jews were to be justified; from hence the consequence is direct and logical, that such Gentiles were as forward in Christianity as the Jews themselves, and there could be no necessity for their submitting to the Mosaic law, when they had already attained the principal end which that law was given to attain; and therefore they need not now submit to the law, as the means. They had attained the end, so the means were needless, and of course they might, being equally qualified with the Jews, be admitted to the privileges of the gospel without being circumcised and submitting to the whole ceremonial law.

This argument, then, of St. Paul's not only doth not relate to, but entirely destroys that free-thinking notion, of man's being justified by the law of nature; and the force of it is not to be evaded if the chief thing supposed in it can be proved, *viz.*, That there were Gentiles who did observe the things contained in the law of Moses; and this I am to consider under my second general head, which was to prove,

Secondly, That the meaning put upon the words of the text is founded on scripture and matter of fact. And this will appear,

1st, From scripture, by proving what it was the law pointed out. And

2ndly, From matter of fact, by showing that the Gentiles did observe that which it pointed out.

Now what the law pointed out was the necessity of our redemption by Christ, and purification by blood. At first view it presents to us a system of religious services, made up of types and emblems; and that these typical services had a meaning well understood,† Moses himself assures us. And had he not, the reason of the thing would speak aloud for itself; for if the bodily action had been all that was required, then the action of the mind, which is the essence of every religious service, would have been wanting; there would be no opportunity to give God, what he chiefly requires, the heart and the affections;‡ and the Jews could not have acted as persons who had souls to be saved. But it is certain, that each part of man is to do its duty in this state of trial, and where God requires the performance of certain outward actions, as the types before, and the sacraments since, Christ came, he thereby treats man according to his constitution and his state, by instituting certain sensible objects to give him the nearest ideas of those objects which are spiritual: for if such be the constitution and state of man, that, as a creature he cannot have, and as a free agent he ought not to have, any ideas inherent or innate, then the reason is evident why God should take such a method; and when he teaches men spiritual objects by the types and the sacraments, that being the only method we can now be taught them, is therefore agreeable to the nature of things, and the state of man. And not only Moses, and the reason of the thing, but later parts of scripture explain the principal types; they show that Christ was the person whom they pointed at, and that in him they were all fulfilled.

He is said to be "the end of the law," (Rom. x. 4.) "Of him Moses wrote—of him the scriptures testified," (John v. 39, 46.) "The fathers were saved, even as we by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," (Acts xv. 11.) The Gospel of God "concerning his Son Jesus was preached by the prophets in the holy scriptures," (Rom. i. 1, 2.) "And to him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins," (Acts x. 43.) The scriptures then plainly declare, that Christ was pointed out by the typical rites and services of the law. But

* Rom. ii. 26. "The uncircumcised (Gentiles) could keep those points of the law which were to justify." And ver. 27. "They could fulfil (answer the end of) the law;" these two passages demonstrate that I have fairly stated the apostle's argument.

† In these passages, § 1. Of sacrifices, Exod. xxx. 15, 16; Lev. ix. 15; xvii. 11; Num. xxviii. 22; Deut. xxxiii. 19. § 2. Of circumcision, Lev. xxvi. 41; Deut. x. 12, 16; xxx. 6. § 3. Of ablution, Lev. xiv. 6, 7, &c.; xvii. 15, 16; Num. viii. 6, 7, &c.; xix. 19, 20. § Of meditating on the law, Deut. vi. 6, &c. viii. 5, 15, 16; xii. 28, &c., he mentions the spiritual sense, and that expressly, literally, and without a figure.

‡ Rom. vii. 14; viii. 6. "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." 2 Cor. iii. 6. "The letter (of the law) killeth, but the spirit giveth life"

That which was the highest act of religion among the Jews, and among the Gentiles also, whereby he was prefigured and pointed out, was sacrifice: "for he was the lamb virtually slain from the foundation of the world," (Rev. xiii. 8.) "By faith in him Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," (Heb. xi. 4.) "And by the same faith Moses kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood," (Heb. xi. 28.) "Christ being our passover who was sacrificed for us," (1 Cor. v. 7.) And "who hath now put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," (Heb. ix. 26.) Christ therefore was pointed out by sacrifices; they were types instituted to keep up and preserve the knowledge of what he has to do and suffer; and means to lay hold of, by the hand of faith, the merits of his future death and sufferings: for they not only pointed him out in a general view, but they also showed the principal end of his coming into the world, to effect our redemption by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all.

It is one of the first in order of revealed truths, that without shedding the blood of Christ there is no remission:—for if God required sacrifices as absolutely necessary for the remission of sin, this proved that the sacrifice of Christ was absolutely necessary to attain that remission. The necessity of the types proved the necessity of the antitype: for if it be the essence of a type, that it be an outward and visible sign instituted by God to represent some spiritual person or object; and if sacrifice was instituted to be the outward and visible sign of Christ, then God's requiring sacrifice as absolutely necessary to atone for sin, was requiring, and that in the strongest manner, the necessity of Christ's making the atonement. The type was only an outward sign to keep in mind what was signified thereby, so that if God required the outward sign, he must of necessity require the thing signified: because he instituted the one in order to attain the other: and by such institution, he made the relation between them as certain as between the means and the end. Sacrifice therefore being a type, could not be instituted for its own sake—the merit of the action lay in considering what it signified; for it was not the bare offering, but the intention, the faith of the offerer, which made the sacrifice a sweet-smelling savour unto God. It was the duty of every offerer to look upon it as what it was—it was a type: he was not then merely to offer—to rest in the offering would be denying things to be what they are; but it was his duty also to consider what was typified, and was intended to be kept up by the outward act of offering; Christ, and what he was to do and suffer for us, were the things intended to be kept up by the outward act; and therefore these were the things, which it was the duty of every person to look at when he offered.

This it was, then, to sacrifice worthily; not to rest in the outward act, but to look by the eye of faith beyond it: for when the sinner brought a clean perfect creature to be sacrificed, laid his hand on its head, and shed the blood, the life, of the creature—this indeed was doing what he was commanded, but not all. The service of the mind was also required, and that was to regard the intent of the action—to confess, that the death the creature suffered was what he deserved, that he had forfeited his life, that it was not in his own power to restore it, and that it could not be restored, but by the merits of that great sacrifice, which he hoped in, and believed would, in the fulness of time, be offered up for his sins. This was making a truly Christian confession of his faith; and this confession all worthy offerers did make; and therefore did conclude from the necessity of the type to make an atonement for sin, that the antitype must be much more necessary.

The law, therefore, by requiring sacrifices as absolutely necessary for the remission of sins, did plainly point out and prove, that there could be no redemption without the sacrifice of Christ: for remission of sins must be previous to redemption; and if there could be no remission without shedding of blood, then certainly without it there could be no redemption. St. Paul applies the typical services to Christ, and the redemption under the first Testament, to the completion of our redemption by him, when he says, "That Christ being become an high priest of good things to come, not by the blood of the sacrifices, but by his own blood, entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." This was perfecting and fulfilling what was typified under

the law: for when the apostle represents Christ as our great high priest—as shedding his blood for us, and offering himself without spot to God—as entering into the holy of holies, and appearing before the mercy seat, in the presence of God—there presenting to the Father the sweet-smelling sacrifice of his Son; doth he not, by representing in this manner what Christ really completed, prove, that what the high priest did, prefigured what he was to do? All the ideas in this description are borrowed from the typical services, and Christ is said to have fulfilled what they signified. What he fulfilled was our redemption by his death and sufferings; and therefore it is evident, that the typical services did signify our redemption by Christ. For when the apostles speak of Christ "putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself—of his redeeming us by his blood—of his being the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world—and of the offering himself, and thereby perfecting for ever them that are sanctified." by using these expressions to describe the completion of our redemption by Christ, do they not prove, that the sacrifices were types of that redemption? For, if they had not pointed out and foretold something, how could they describe what was fulfilled? The relation then between the ideas of sacrifice and Christ must have been well understood before the same terms could have been descriptive of them both; and, indeed, without that relation, our redemption by Christ, being a spiritual effect, would not easily have been understood; for the sufferings of Christ, his shedding his blood, and his death, were but the visible parts of his atonement. The chief of this great action lay between God and himself, invisible to all others. And this part a man can no more conceive or express, than he could have sustained it. The weight Christ sustained was infinite, and the action was spiritual; and we have no words, for we converse with no objects from whence we take them, which can give us adequate ideas of what is infinite, or of those actions which are purely spiritual. In all such cases, the best teacher is God; and the scripture ideas are the perfectest we can have; and if our redemption by Christ be there described by ideas taken from the sacrifices, it will follow not only that the sacrifices did point out our redemption by Christ, but also that they (when rightly understood) will give us the best ideas, and, of course, the clearest evidence of that redemption.

The law of Moses, then, it appears, did point out something by its types and emblems. It pointed out by them the person of Christ. Particularly it pointed him out by sacrifices, which typified what he was to do and suffer for us. The necessity of these sacrifices proved the necessity of Christ's sacrifice. And God's requiring them as necessary for redemption, proved also the necessity of our redemption by Christ; and therefore it is evident, that the law pointed out and proved the necessity of our redemption by Christ, and purification by blood.

The only thing, then, remaining to be proved is,

Secondly, To show from matter of fact, that the Gentiles did observe what the law pointed out. And

This the apostle declares in the words of the text; he says, "They did the things contained in the law of Moses, and showed by so doing, that what the law was to work and effect was written in their hearts;" and thereby they gave proof that they believed those doctrines which the law was principally intended to point out. The text, then, is a full and clear argument for the truth of this proposition, and upon that footing I might rest the matter, were there not other parts of scripture which incontestably prove this matter of fact, by showing in what manner the Gentiles became acquainted with the things contained in the law of Moses.

Now upon the fall, Moses informs us that a revelation was made of the new terms of salvation, and that all the typical services which were to give and preserve the knowledge of this revelation were instituted; sacrifice in particular took its rise from hence: for at the end of the days, *i. e.* at some stated time, Abel is said to have offered through faith. Now, it being impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin by any virtue of its own, it was not likely that any means, which had no apparent connexion with the end proposed, should be of human invention to atone for sin. And there being so soon after the fall, a stated time of sacrificing, it is not probable that the time of the action should

have any more of human invention in it than the action itself. And there being also faith joined to the offering, it is certain the offering had a relation to some spiritual object, and as such could have nothing of human invention in it at all: for faith being the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, if the things hoped for and not seen cannot be attained without faith in Christ, and faith in Christ cannot be attained without a revelation, then it is certain Abel's offering was of divine institution; because there could be no faith in Christ where there was no revelation. The doctrine of remission of sins, through faith in his blood, could not have been discovered by unassisted reason; and yet Abel had that faith, and through it he offered. Therefore, in direct consequence from each other, there were revelation—faith—offering; revelation, without which there could be no faith—faith, without which there could be no acceptable offering—and an offering founded on faith, which is founded on revelation; and, therefore, offering sacrifice was revealed upon the fall, and as such, was of divine institution.

And as in all other chief points of the law, so especially in this, it is no more than a renewal, and committing to writing, the same terms of salvation, which had been revealed upon the fall: for the chief things contained in it are mentioned long before the written law was given from Sinai. Offering sacrifice, which was the highest act of religion among mankind, was in use from the fall downwards. The patriarchs all sacrificed. Thus did Job continually. And besides the sacrifice, all its appendages and the sacrificial rites were instituted together: for later scriptures lay nearly as much stress upon them as upon the sacrifice itself; so that by parity of reason, what was a necessary part of every sacrifice had an institution coeval with the sacrifices: because if God would not accept sacrifices without some particular rites, then these rites were a part of them which he did accept. And he accepted the sacrifices of Abel, of Noah, and Abraham, before they offered there; for these rites were instituted, and, of course, before the written law; for it is mentioned before the written law that there was a priest who had a right to offer. His habits were appointed. A distinction of clean and unclean creatures was made. An altar was raised. And there was a stated time, at which sacrifice, with all its rites, was to be performed. These points, then, being previous to God's accepting the sacrifice, and thereupon pardoning the sinner, must have had an institution prior to the offering the sacrifice, and that institution was the revelation made upon the fall.

Here, then, the scripture gives us a rational account, by what means the Gentiles became acquainted with and did the things contained in the law of Moses: for the law being but a renewal of what had been before revealed, and was now committed to writing, must be known to all those who were descended from them who had revelation. Adam had that revelation. Noah and his sons had it, and consequently their children could not but learn from them those rites and ceremonies which they saw their parents practise, and in the performance of which they themselves were assistants: and if the Gentiles knew this revelation, they might do the things contained in the law of Moses, without having that law in writing; they need not surely be referred to the written law to learn the typical services, when there had been an institution of them prior to that, and a period before when they were observed by all mankind.

In process of time, indeed, after the era of the law, men began to lose sight of the reason and end of these institutions, and by degrees strangely corrupted what had been revealed. But yet what strongly confirms the apostle's argument is, that they still observed the outward part; the religious ceremonies were (as far as we know) for some ages after the law, universal; for the higher we go in antiquity, they are found to be more uniform, and consistent with the history of Moses. Even so low down as the heathen writings now remaining, we find the primitive emblems made use of, and there is but little variation in the minute rites relating to sacrifice. The historians and the poets abound with descriptions of sacrifices—of the great efficacy of blood—of the hopes they had that God would be placated and appeased by it—and of the holocausts whose smell they represent as grateful to the Deity. And from those descriptions a parallel might be drawn between them and the Jewish ceremonies; but it would be here a

needless work, several learned men have already done it, and every one's reading will supply him with instances enough. It is sufficient for my purpose at present to allege, what is a known and uncontested matter of fact, that all nations of the world offered sacrifices, and for some ages after the law, with the same rites as are there instituted, and whoever offered sacrifice out of a right principle, as St. Paul declares the Gentiles in the text did, he certainly observed what the law pointed out.

As, then, there was a revelation of the Christian religion made upon the fall, the predictive part of the evidence of which is in the Old Testament, and the completion in the New; and as this revelation was once known unto all mankind, and was corrupted by their own wanton imaginations; so from hence we have satisfactory answers to those boasted objections of modern infidels,—why was the Jewish religion confined to, and hidden in, types and mysteries? Why was the Christian revelation made so late? How shall they be saved who perhaps never heard of it? And why is it not now the religion of all mankind? These objections, it hath appeared, are all founded (as I apprehend all infidelity is) in ignorance; in ignorance of the evidence for, of the design, and of the meaning of scripture; for the text, as now explained, is a clear answer to these and many more such like objections, and fully proves that they are made in direct opposition to matter of fact. But

These I cannot now enlarge upon; I shall only observe, that it is evident from the plain literal sense of the words, from scripture, and from matter of fact, that St. Paul doth not treat in this passage of, nay, therein overthrows all pretences to, man's being justified by the law of nature. The persons he mentions, were such only as did the things contained in the law of Moses, and surely the religion of nature was not delineated in the law of Moses! This exhibits to us one great truth, "That without shedding the blood of Christ there is no remission," and doth the religion of nature treat of any such doctrine? Are not remission of sins in general, and remission of sins by blood, points which make no part of that religion? And yet the Gentiles in the text were convinced of such remission; they showed by their actions that they wanted it, and they performed all these typical services, which kept up their faith and hopes in the Redeemer of the world; and, therefore, they neither learnt from their own reason, from the light of nature, or from the fitness of things; but from revelation only did they learn to do the things contained in the law of Moses—that was their rule—to that they conformed—and by their customary observance of it were justified. And can we be justified by any other means? Have we discovered that the light of nature is safer than the light of heaven; or that it is a duty to follow the fitness of things, rather than the laws of the Creator of all things? Will metaphysics guide us better than scripture, or reason than God? If such pretences to direct and save ourselves will not bear to be heard among Christians, why then have such methods of justification been supported from this text? They have, in fact, no foundation here, or anywhere else in scripture, and they are as opposite to our excellent church as to scripture itself: for the first reformers have protested against such doctrines, and I shall prove the truth of what hath been now said, and shall choose to pass my censure upon all pretences to man's being justified by the law of nature, by morality alone, and such like, in their words rather than my own, which are, that

"They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature; for holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS:

CONSIDERED IN TWO DISCOURSES, PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, MARCH 20, 1757; IN THE MORNING AT ST. MARY'S, AND IN THE AFTERNOON AT ST. PETER'S.

Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.—Isaiah liv. 17.

TO THE

REV. DR. RANDOLPH,

Vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, and President of Corpus Christi College.

When I delivered these discourses, I had no design to make them public; but I have been since compelled to it. I understand they gave great offence, especially to you, and I was in consequence thereof refused the university pulpit. In justice, not to myself, for I desire to be out of the question, but to the great doctrine here treated of, namely, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, as the only ground of our acceptance and justification before God the Father, I have sent to the press what was delivered from the pulpit. I leave the friends of our church to judge whether there be anything herein advanced contrary to scripture, and to the doctrines of the reformation. If not, I am safe. If there be, you are bound to make it appear. You have a good pen, and you have great leisure. Make use of them; and I hope and pray you may use them for your good and mine.

I am, with my constant and hearty prayers for the university's prosperity, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, your humble servant in Christ,

William Romaine.

SERMON I

Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together. I the Lord have created it.—Isaiah xlv. 8.

While man is in the body he must receive his instruction from the bodily senses. He cannot of himself form an idea of any thing spiritual, but as it is compared to, and illustrated by, some material object. And this method of instruction God has followed in the scripture, both in the language, and in the composition. The language is entirely suited to man in his present state, every Hebrew word signifying first some material object, and thereby conveying the idea of some correspondent spiritual object. And the scripture composition abounds with images and illustrations of divine things taken from nature. The evangelical prophet is a remarkable instance of this kind of writing. He represents the various parts of the kingdom of grace under their expressive and familiar pictures in nature. He sets spiritual things as it were before our eyes, under the images which God had established in his created works, in order to bring them down to our understandings. And every illustration of this kind, being God's own application of natural things, must be considered as infallible truth. The spiritual application is as certain as the outward fact from which it is taken. God would not use the

book of nature to illustrate the book of grace, unless the illustration was just and instructive: for it is not consistent with his perfections to propose to his creatures for truth what would deceive, or to reveal what did not tend to edify them.

In this light, let us consider the beautiful image in the text. God is here recommending to us the fundamental doctrine of the gospel. He proposes it in clear and plain terms; and to convince our understandings, and to win our affections, he sets it before our eyes under a very affecting picture. He represents the doctrine under one of the most common and familiar occurrences in nature. Thither he sends us for instruction in righteousness—and may the Spirit of the Lord enable every one of you to apply the instruction for the good of your souls, while I am

First, Opening the true sense and meaning of the words. And then,

Secondly, Making some practical remarks upon them.

And first, The words are a scripture image and application of a well-known fact in nature. The earth is supposed to be deprived of the rain of heaven. It has no refreshing showers, no enlivening dew to saturate the thirsty soil; and for want of their fruitful influence the earth is entirely barren. It produces nothing either for use or ornament. While it was lying in this state, God gave the word, and the clouds descended, and the earth opened to receive the fruitful drops of rain, which they poured down, and by their prolific virtue such effects followed, as the Psalmist has beautifully described in these words, "He watereth the hills from above, whereby the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. The high trees are satisfied, even the cedars of Libanus, which he hath planted." These are the certain consequences of warm and gentle showers. When they are animated with the light of the sun in the spring season of the year, they never fail to bring forth rich products of the earth, from the lowest herb to the highest cedar on Libanus. Under this plain and familiar image God intends to teach us the most important truth of Christianity. Because it is the most necessary to be believed, he has therefore made it the most easy to be understood. The principal point of view in which he would have us to consider the image in the text is this: The earth without rain lies barren and desolate, the rain descends from heaven, and is dropped down from the clouds, and when it comes in plentiful showers, and there is clear shining after it, then it always produces fruitfulness. Hither the Holy Spirit sends us for instruction in righteousness. Righteousness is to the soul, what the rain and dew are to the thirsty ground. The heavens were to drop this righteousness from above, and the skies were to pour it down, while man's heart being opened thankfully receives the heavenly gift. He has no hand, no merit in procuring the gift, but has only to accept it, as the dry parched ground does the enlivening drops of rain, which change its withered barren face into pleasing verdure and rich fruitfulness. In order to understand clearly what the all-wise Spirit would teach us under this sweet image, we should have a perfect idea of the word righteousness, upon which the whole stress of the passage turns. In the Old Testament it is a mercantile term, taken from the method of trading in the early ages of the world, when business was carried on, and money paid and received by weight. The fair trader kept an even balance in paying and receiving, therefore he was a just or righteous man. And hence justice, which is the emblem of this fair trading, is always painted with an even balance in her hand. When the scripture speaks of human affairs, this is always the sense of the word righteousness; for thus it is used Lev. xix. 36. "Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have." The same word is here four times rendered just, which in the text is rendered righteousness. And in like manner in Dent. xxv. 14, 15, the command runs, "Thou shalt not have in thine house diverse measures, a great and a small, but thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have." So again Ezek. xlv. 9, 10. "Take away your exactions from my people saith the Lord God. Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath." In these passages, not to mention any more, the same word which is

translated righteousness in the text, is undoubtedly applied to tne evenness of the balance, and to strict justice in weights and measures. When the scripture speaks of dealings between man and man, this is the established sense of the word; and if we spiritualize this sense we shall understand the usage of the word in religious affairs. All that we are, and all that we hope for, is God's free gift; and therefore as the Lord and giver of all, he has an unalienable right to our continual service. And he demanded it. He gave us a holy, just, and good law, to which he required the perfect, uninterrupted obedience of every faculty of soul and body. If man had paid it him in thought, word, and deed, then he would have been just—he would have dealt uprightly with God, and the divine law and justice would have had no demands upon him. But if we pay it not, then we are unjust: and the law for the first offence pronounces its curses upon us: for it is written, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law." If we continue not in all things, if we fail but in one point, then we rob God of his due. We become his debtors, and law and justice may seize upon us, and cast us into prison, until the uttermost farthing be paid; which it is impossible we should ever pay, because the obedience of millions of years could make no satisfaction for one single transgression against the infinitely perfect law of God. One transgression having infinite demerit in it, would weigh down the scale infinitely, and therefore eternally: unless some infinitely perfect obedience, which no finite creature can pay, be put into the opposite scale.

Upon this state of the case it appears, that righteousness signifies the most strict and unerring justice in our dealings with God. The law of God, which is his revealed will, and the rule of our obedience, is holy as God is holy, yea, perfectly, infinitely holy. It cannot behold the least iniquity, any more than God can behold it, and therefore it cuts the sinner off from all right and title to legal righteousness for the very first offence, puts him under the curse, and subjects him to all its pains and penalties: and upon whom the law pronounces its curses, God the righteous Judge will pour down the vials of his wrath. Upon the unrighteous he will rain snares, fire, and brimstone, storm, and tempest: this shall be their portion to drink for ever and ever.

Are you then, my brethren, in the number of the righteous, or of the unrighteous? Is it not of infinite consequence to know what state you are in? For certainly if it should appear that you are unrighteous, you would not act so contrary to your own interest, as to choose to be subject to the curses of God's holy law, and to suffer the threatened punishment, if there be a way left to escape. Do you see then, how necessary it is we should inquire, whether we have acted righteously with God or not. To the infallible word therefore, and to the testimony, let us repair. The oracles of truth inform us, that, after God had finished his six days' work, he looked down from heaven, and behold all things were good. There was no disorder in the natural world, and no evil in the spiritual world. But he is soon after represented looking down from heaven upon the children of men, and behold all things were evil. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. vi. 5.) Whence was the origin of this universal evil? Mankind had gone out of the way of righteousness, they had broken the law, and had made themselves altogether corrupt, and were become abominable, there was none of them righteous, no, not one. What! Not one righteous man left upon earth? No. God declares by the mouth of his holy prophet, that there was not one. They had all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. They were by nature children of his wrath through one man's disobedience, and they were ten times more the children of wrath by actual guilt; and being sinners against God's law, both by nature and by life, he hath shut them all up under sin, in a state of condemnation, reserving them to the judgment of the great day.

This is our condition, We are all unrighteous: and we are without strength to attain any righteousness of our own: because we are poor, broken debtors, who have nothing to pay. One offence attaints our blood, and renders us incapable of doing any act that will be deemed good and valid in the court of heaven,

for this irreversible decree stands against us in the divine records: "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

From hence arises a question, the most important and interesting that can engage a sinner's attention, upon which every person concerned about his eternal welfare, would reason in this manner. "I acknowledge the law of God to be holy and good, but I have broken it, and have robbed God of his glory, and the law of its honour. I am unrighteous. As such, heaven is shut against me, and will be shut for ever, unless I can be made righteous. But how or by what means can this be done? God's law is immutable. His truth that threatened to punish transgression is inflexible. His justice is infinite, and must have satisfaction for the broken law; yea, full and perfect satisfaction, suitable to the infinite purity and holiness of the divine nature. But alas! what satisfaction can I make it? Nay, what satisfaction could all the holy angels and the highest order of beings, if they would lay down their lives for me, make to that justice, which is infinite, and to which I am an infinite debtor. Nothing can save me, but some divine and infinite righteousness wrought out for me, and in my stead, and God alone can work out such a righteousness; but how can I hope that he will, since he is the very person whom I have offended by my sin?"

In this manner, every person concerned about eternity would reason. When he is convinced of his own unrighteousness, he will look out for some means to be made righteous, and he will soon find that there are no human means. Righteousness grows not upon this earth. It fled to heaven, when all the world was brought in guilty before God; and it cannot return to earth until all the offended attributes of God be satisfied. But what created being can make a satisfaction equal to the offence? All hope, humanly speaking, is cut off: for no finite creature can do an infinite action. Oh! what glad tidings then does the prophet here bring to a guilty world. He sees the heavens from above dropping down righteousness, and the earth opening and receiving it. The blessing is so unmerited, so inestimable, that one would be tempted to ask,—How God could be so gracious? How can he exercise such mercy consistent with his other perfections? How can he suffer the guilty to be accounted righteous, until the demands of law and justice be fully satisfied? But where is the satisfaction equal to their infinite demands? And until such a satisfaction be made, how can his all-pure holiness look upon the impure sinner, or how can his inflexible truth, which threatened punishment, remit it? Glory be to his free grace, which hath found out a righteousness for us, against which law and justice cannot make the least exception, and which hath preserved the glory of all his attributes inviolate; and that is the righteousness of the God-man Christ Jesus.

We are taught by the Christian verity, that in the divine essence there are three persons of equal glory and majesty; none is before or after other, none is greater or less than another. Between these divine Persons the covenant of grace was ordered in all things and sure; and from this covenant the co-equal and co-eternal Three took the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Son is a name of office, descriptive of the wonderful humiliation of the Messiah, who took our nature, and was made a Son for our salvation—God and man being united in one Christ, as much as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man. The God-man undertakes in our nature to pay perfect satisfaction to his Father's justice. Accordingly he paid the law an infinitely perfect obedience. And he thereby magnified it, and made it more honourable than the obedience of all created beings could have done. Then he suffered what was due to our breach of the law, and paid the death which we deserved. And justice demonstrated, that it had no more demands upon him, when it released him from the prison of the grave. And by this obedience and these sufferings he wrought out an infinitely perfect righteousness, which being imputed to the unrighteous, and laid hold of by the hand of faith, renders them perfectly righteous at the bar of justice.

This is the righteousness of God to which every sinner must submit, if he be ever discharged from condemnation. He must receive it from God as his free gift, without the least merit or deserving. And he must trust wholly to it, never presuming to add anything of his own to it, as a condition of justification. These

are hard lessons to the pride of our corrupt hearts. Indeed it is the hardest lesson of grace to humble us so far, that we can give up the merit of all our fancied good works, and take the righteousness of God as a free gift. As if God's righteousness was not perfect enough, we are always thinking to add something of our own to it. Our fallen nature is ever tempting us to this absurdity, and the Holy Spirit has not offered us a more forcible argument throughout the scripture, than the striking image in the text. Our guilty souls are compared to the dry withered ground, which has been long deprived of the fruitful rain and dew of heaven. When they were lying parched and burnt up with drought, it pleased God to command the heavens to distil the refreshing drops of dew, and the clouds to pour down their genial and enlivening showers, which the earth opening its mouth thankfully received. Now the righteousness of Christ is bestowed, as these sweet influences of heaven are, freely—the earth has no hand, no merit in bringing down the dew or the rain, nor have we any in bringing down the righteousness of Christ. And the fruits, which the rain and dew enable the earth to bring forth, are produced by their prolific virtue, animated with the genial warmth of the sun: for the earth is entirely passive and inactive, and only acts as it is acted upon. In like manner every good gift and grace is from above; they are the fruits of righteousness, which could never have grown in our barren hearts, unless Christ had sent his Spirit from on high to plant and to water them with the continual dew of his blessing. When he withholds his influence, they immediately wither and die. When he rains and shines upon them, then they flourish. This is the beautiful illustration in the text. Let the heavens drop down the righteousness of Christ from above, like the dew, and let the skies pour it down, like fruitful showers upon a thirsty ground—"Let the earth open, let man open his heart, and then they shall bring forth salvation;" they, *i. e.* the righteousness which is from above, poured down upon and received into man's heart, shall therein take root, and shall enable it to bring forth fruit abundantly, even present and eternal salvation. Salvation is not of man. It belongeth unto the Lord. It is one of the infinitely perfect works of God: for there is no Saviour besides him—none that can deliver man from the enemies of his peace, but the same Almighty Being who created the heavens and the earth, and who still supports them by the word of his power. And when he, by whom all things were made, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, then his name was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins. Salvation on his part was finished, when, having fully satisfied the demands of law and justice by his obedience and sufferings, and thereby wrought out an all-perfect righteousness for us, he ascended with great glory to his kingdom in heaven. But he did not leave us comfortless. The Holy Ghost the Comforter has now the conducting of the work of salvation. And when he humbles the sinner under a sense of his unrighteousness by nature and life, and enables him to wait at the throne of grace for a free pardon, when God the Father accepts him through the merits of his Son, and justifies him, then it is the office of the Holy Spirit to bear his testimony with the sinner's spirit that he is a child of God. With the act of justification thus evidenced and applied, he receives justifying faith, and is brought into a state of salvation; for the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. There is no salvation without righteousness, and it is of the Lord's free grace that he is received as righteous, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him by faith. Christ's righteousness can be made ours only by imputation. As our sins were actually imputed to him, so his righteousness is actually imputed to us. The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all, and therefore he was wounded for our transgressions, and was bruised for our iniquities. As he thus took our sins upon himself, so we by faith take his righteousness upon us, and by it are saved.

And when the heavens have dropped down righteousness, and the barren heart of sinful man has opened and received it, and with it salvation, then together with salvation, the prophet says, "righteousness shall spring up together." Until righteousness and salvation be in the soul, nothing good springs up: it produces no good works, any more than the earth brings forth fruit without the rain

and dew of heaven; but when righteousness comes from above, it manifests itself by its effects, as rain does. It does not remain in the man, as an inactive barren principle; but it is mighty in operation, to enable him to bring forth fruit. As soon as it is poured down from on high, and received into the heart, it takes root and springs up with every fair blossom, and produces all the ripe fruits of holiness. He that before was dead to God, and to the things of God, having received justification to life, hereby glorifies his heavenly Father, that he bears much fruit. Righteousness changes him, as much as rain does the dry barren ground. As it makes the wilderness and the solitary place to rejoice, and to blossom like the rose, to blossom abundantly, and to rejoice even with joy and singing, so does righteousness act in the barren wilderness of the sinner's heart, bringing with it the reviving streams of grace, and causing every sweet and holy temper to spring up. The grace, which flows from righteousness, renews and sanctifies the heart, makes it dead to sin, and alive unto God. This grace enables us to put off the old man of sin with his corrupt deeds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. This new man is created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and he produces them daily more in number, and of a richer kind—watered with the fruitful dew of heaven, they are continually springing up, and growing to the glory of God, and to the good of men, and they are continually administering that comfort to the justified soul, which the prophet has described in these sweet expressions—"The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever," (Isaiah xxxii. 17.) If any man has peace with God it must arise from righteousness, from being justified by faith; and if any man has quietness and assurance for ever, it must be the effect of that righteousness which God has created. It must not arise from going about to establish our own righteousness, but from submitting ourselves to the righteousness of God, of which he says in the last words of the text, "I the Lord have created it." I Jehovah, who created all things, have created this righteousness for the unrighteous and the ungodly. It is a new creation. And to create is my incommunicable attribute. You may as soon create a world out of nothing, as create that righteousness, with which sinners must be clothed, if ever they stand before me without spot of sin unto salvation. No righteousness but what is of my creation can present you unblameable and unreproveable in my sight. This is the immutable decree of Jehovah. He that cannot change in himself, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth, has determined, that the righteousness by which we are accounted just before him, is not our own righteousness, but the righteousness of God. It is a righteousness which comes from heaven, and does not grow out of this earth. It is the free gift of God, and not attained by the work of man. It is a righteousness of God's own creation, an infinitely perfect and unspotted righteousness. When a man is able to create a planetary system, then he may create such a righteousness for himself. If the one would be the height of presumption and blasphemy, so is the other. That man never saw the corruption and plague of his own heart, who dreams of working out for himself a righteousness, in which he may appear faultless at the bar of justice. Sin and pride have so blinded his eyes, that he knows not himself. He sees not how corrupt his nature nor how corrupt his life is, nor yet how corrupt his very best duties are. He is also ignorant of the perfect nature of God's law, which is as holy as God is holy, and which will not receive sincere for uninterrupted obedience, but cuts off all claim to legal righteousness for one single offence, even in thought; and he is not acquainted with the gospel method of salvation, which discovers to us, how sinners, corrupt in nature and life, and under condemnation, may be pardoned and justified by the righteousness of the God-man Jesus Christ, imputed unto them by faith. If scripture authority could convince, and scripture images could explain this important doctrine, one might hope the text would leave no doubt in any serious mind.

I shall endeavour to remove the common difficulties concerning the doctrine under my second general head, wherein I proposed to make some practical remarks upon the words of the text: but the time will not permit me to enlarge upon them at present. And therefore leaving them for the subject of another discourse, I would only observe how beautifully these great truths of the gospel are illustrated in the text.

First, we read that the righteousness of Christ is an heavenly gift. "Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness." And then the sinner has only to receive it as a free gift, he has no merit in bringing it down. "Let the earth open" and receive the heavenly gift. And when this righteousness is received by faith, then it brings the sinner into a state of salvation—"and let them bring forth salvation." And when he is placed in this state, then he will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth—"And let righteousness spring up together. I the Lord have created it" to justify the unrighteous, that being made free from sin, and become servants to God, they might have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

SERMON II.

Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together. I the Lord have created it.—Isaiah xlv. 8.

In a former discourse upon these words it was proposed to consider, First, Their true sense and meaning; and Secondly, To make some practical remarks upon them. Having gone through the first particular, and established the doctrine, I come now to reduce it to practice, and this I shall do, by making some remarks upon the words in the order they lie in the text.

The first remark that would occur to an attentive reader, is the state of man before righteousness is poured down upon him from on high. He is like the dry ground, which for want of rain is desolate and barren. So is man in a state of nature; destitute of the heavenly influence of Christ's righteousness, he has no good thing springing up in him. Before he is made righteous, he is altogether unrighteous. Being unjust, he is an object of divine justice. The law of God looks upon him as a transgressor, and considers him in a state of condemnation. The sovereign judge regards him as a child of his wrath, and has passed the just decree, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

This is the condition of all men by nature, they are unrighteous, and condemned for their unrighteousness: and they are also helpless and without strength to attain any righteousness for themselves. And yet there is in their fallen nature a cursed pride, which never brake out with greater violence than at present, and which will not submit to the righteousness of God. That we have no righteousness in ourselves, and can attain none by any power or working of our own, is the plain doctrine of God's word, is the very fundamental article of our established church, and it is evident from daily and melancholy experience, and it is the first practical truth in Christianity; for until we be deeply convinced of our sinfulness and helpessness, we shall see no reason to apply to Christ for his righteousness. Men must find themselves sick before they will send for the physician. Our want of righteousness is the cause of all our spiritual sickness and maladies, and the scripture speaks plainly of our want of righteousness. "We have before proved," says the apostle, "both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin, as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one." So says our ninth article: "By original sin, man is very far gone from original righteousness, and by it every person born into the world deserveth God's wrath and damnation." And concerning our helplessness in this state, our reformers in the second part of the homily, "On the misery of man," speak the sense of scripture in these words:

"Thus we have heard, how evil we be of ourselves, how of ourselves, and by ourselves, we have no goodness, help, or salvation, but contrariwise, sin, damnation, and death everlasting: which if we deeply weigh and consider, we shall the better understand the great mercy of God, and how our salvation cometh only by Christ: for in ourselves (as of ourselves) we find nothing whereby we may be

delivered from this miserable captivity, into the which we are cast, through the envy of the devil by breaking of God's commandment, in our first parent Adam. We are all become unclean, but we all are not able to cleanse ourselves, nor make one another of us clean. We are by nature the children of God's wrath, but we are not able to make ourselves the children and inheritors of God's glory. We are sheep that run astray, but we cannot of our own power come again to the sheep-fold: so great is our imperfection and weakness. In ourselves therefore may we not glory, which of ourselves are nothing but sinful; neither may we rejoice in any works that we do, all which be so imperfect and impure, that they are not able to stand before the righteous judgment-seat of God, as the holy prophet David saith, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for no man that liveth shall be found righteous in thy sight.' To God therefore must we flee, or else shall we never find peace, rest, and quietness of conscience in our hearts."

Thus far our reformers. To the truth of their words we have all set our hands, and may God set our hearts to act agreeably to our subscriptions. Though they were our own act and deed, yet it is a matter of fact, which cannot be concealed, nor too much lamented, that many persons act directly contrary to their most solemn engagements: for how seldom do we hear any thing from the pulpit about original sin, or about there being none righteous, no not one. Instead of this antiquated doctrine, what is more common than to hear declamations upon the sufficiency of human reason in matters of religion, upon the dignity of human nature, and upon moral rectitude? And is it not the general scope of young preaching to recommend practical duties, as necessary terms and conditions of our justification before God? Is this the case, my brethren, or is it not? Certainly you know it is. Have you not heard reason extolled as a sufficient guide in matters of religion, contrary to the express word of God, which declares that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, nor while he continues a natural man can he know them, let him pretend to reason ever so much about them? Have you not heard men lavish in the praises of the dignity of human nature, which, if God's account of human nature be true, is an unrighteous dignity? What is a more common topic, than to cry up moral rectitude, which, if scripture be true, is an unrighteous rectitude, and to recommend practical duties as terms of justification, which is setting them up in the place of Christ's righteousness, and teaching men an unrighteous obedience? Upon whatever footing this be done, it is an unrighteous attempt; whether it be upon the principles of natural religion, or morality, or any other fashionable system, it is equally unrighteous, because it is going about to establish a righteousness of man's own, and not submitting to the righteousness of God; and whoever does this, neither knows his own want of righteousness, nor his inability to attain any by human means; nor does he know that there is no righteousness to be had, but what must come down from heaven, but what the heavens must drop down from above, and the skies must pour out: the application of which truth is my second remark.

The text clearly teaches us, that righteousness comes from above, as the rain does. It does not spring or grow out of the earth, for there is none upon earth righteous, no, not one; but God sends it down from heaven. In like manner as the dry parched ground has not the rain in itself, but receives it from the fruitful influence of the heavens, so the barren wilderness of man's heart has no righteousness until the Holy Spirit bring it from above: for it is his office to convince the sinner of his unrighteousness, and then to convince him of righteousness, by giving him faith to apply to himself that divine righteousness which Christ wrought out for his justification and salvation.

If any member of our church thinks this doctrine wanting in point of evidence, let him consult the articles and homilies; words cannot be plainer than those are in the beginning of the sermon, "On the salvation of mankind by only Christ our Saviour, from Sin and Death everlasting." "Because all men be sinners, and offenders against God, and breakers of his law and commandments, therefore can no man by his own acts, works, and deeds (seem they never so good) be justified, and made righteous before God: but every man of necessity is con-

strained to seek for another righteousness of justification, to be received at God's own hands, that is to say, the forgiveness of his sins and trespasses, in such things as he hath offended. And this justification or righteousness, which we so receive of God's mercy and Christ's merits, embraced by faith, is taken, accepted, and allowed of God for our perfect and full justification: for" as it follows in the latter part of the same homily "all the good works that we can do be imperfect, and therefore not able to deserve our justification; but our justification doth come freely by the mere mercy of God; and of so great and free mercy, that whereas all the world was not able of themselves to pay any part towards their ransom, it pleased our heavenly Father of his infinite mercy, without any our desert or deserving, to prepare for us the most precious jewels of Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be fully paid, the law fulfilled, and his justice fully satisfied. So that Christ is now the righteousness of all them that truly do believe in him."

This is the doctrine of our reformers, and if any person refuse to abide by their authority, let him consult the oracles of truth, where he may read that the righteousness by which we are justified, is not man's, but God's: and that Christ the God-man is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; and if he still refuse to make mention of his righteousness, even his only, the Holy Spirit refers him to the fair volume of nature for further evidence. He teaches us that fallen man without the righteousness of Christ, is like the earth without rain. Look, then, upon the face of the earth after there has been no rain for two or three summer months, and see with your own eyes the necessity of having righteousness rained down from heaven. You see the earth hath lost its verdure. The more tender vegetables are quite dead. The more robust hang their heads and droop. This is the true picture of the natural man destitute of Christ's righteousness. No grace can grow, no virtue can flourish in him. His heart is a parched up wilderness, in which nothing good can spring, until Christ's righteousness be rained upon it. If the fact be true in nature, this doctrine must be equally true in grace. If nothing can grow without the rain and dew of heaven, then nothing can grow without the righteousness of Christ. for he who cannot deceive uses this illustration, to teach us the necessity of Christ's righteousness. "Ye heavens drop down the dew," says he, "and let the skies pour out righteousness." Its original is from heaven, and it comes to us from thence to overthrow the pride of natural religion, and morality, and whatever ascribes to fallen man the will and the power of making himself righteous before God. That which makes us righteous is not in any faculty of nature, but is entirely the free gift of grace. And it is owing to men's vain glory and pride, which, of all vices, is most universally grafted in all mankind, that men know not themselves, and will not look up to heaven for that righteousness which they want. Hence it is that we hear so much about natural and moral religion, which pay their court to the pride of our fallen nature, and hence comes that execrable position upon which they are built, *viz.* "That man has in himself the rule of right and obligations to follow it." Is not this insulting God to his face? He says, that all men are gone out of the right way; the moralist gives him the lie, and says, "No, I have still in myself the rule of right." What rule of right has he in himself, whom God has pronounced unrighteous and abominable altogether? Has the unrighteous man the rule of righteousness in himself? What sort of a rule is it by which an unrighteous man walks? And what obligations has he in himself to follow the rule of right, of whom, God says, there is none that doeth good, no, not one? Can he have at the same time in himself, obligations to follow the rule of right, the thoughts of the imaginations of whose heart are only evil continually? It is impossible. Until Christ's righteousness be poured down upon him from heaven, he is blind and dark in the things of God, he has no rule of right, and he has obligations, and strong ones, to follow the rule of wrong, but none to follow what is right. This is God's account of fallen man. How different is it from the flattering view in which our moral teachers love to paint and dress the fancied dignity of their nature. Pride, ignorant of itself, makes them believe that they are still great and noble beings; and they cannot bear the just character which our church has drawn of them in the conclusion of

the homily on the misery of man. "Hitherto we have heard what we are of ourselves, very sinful, wretched, and damnable. Again, we have heard, how that of ourselves, and by ourselves, we are not able either to think a good thought, or work a good deed, so that we can find in ourselves no hope of salvation, but rather whatsoever maketh unto our destruction." We must have this humbling view of ourselves, if ever we see reason to seek righteousness from heaven. May God humble us all, and convince us deeply of our want of righteousness, that we may apply to him for it. Knowing where it may be had, we shall apply for it properly, which leads me to consider,

Thirdly, How it is to be attained.

The place of its growth may point out unto us the true method of attaining it. It is of heavenly extraction. You cannot ascend to heaven to bring it down. But may not your prayers and good works ascend to merit it? No, they cannot. Until Christ's righteousness be imputed to you by faith, your prayers are an abomination, and your fancied good works are nothing but sin. So says the scripture, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." So says our church in her articles, "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, neither do they make men meet to receive grace; yea, rather, for that they are not done, as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." We doubt not but the best of them are only so many splendid sins. They may adorn a man's outward conversation, may gain him the honour of men, but in the eyes of God they are of no price; because they flow from an unregenerate heart. So that works done before we receive Christ's righteousness can do nothing towards meriting it, and works done after receiving it can add nothing to it. It is a free gift, therefore works done before cannot merit it. It waits for no qualification, no condition in the receiver, because it is given to the most unworthy, and is given to supply the want of all qualifications and conditions; it is given to the unrighteous and to the ungodly. And it wants no works done after receiving to add to it, because it is infinitely perfect. It is the righteousness of God, and will prove itself to be from God by its fruits, which fruits evidence us to be righteous, but do not make us so; for if they were to make us righteous, but in part, that would be going about to establish our own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God.

This is the doctrine of scripture. After the apostle had established it by various proofs, he thus sums them all up; "therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law." Our church has made the same conclusion in her 11th article, where she teaches, "That we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the homily of justification." In which homily we have these words: "Justification is not the office of man, but of God: for man cannot make himself righteous by his own works, neither in part nor in the whole, for that were the greatest arrogancy and presumption of man, that antichrist could set up against God, to affirm, that a man might, by his own works, take away and purge his own sins, and so justify himself. But justification is the office of God only, and is not a thing which we render unto him, but which we receive of him; not which we give to him, but which we take of him by his free mercy, and by the only merits of his most dearly beloved Son, our only redeemer, saviour, and justifier, Jesus Christ."

In the following part of the same homily are these words:

"The very true meaning of this proposition or saying, 'We be justified by faith in Christ only,' is this, we put our faith in Christ, that we be justified by him only, that we be justified by God's free mercy, and the merits of our Saviour Christ only, and by no virtue or good works of our own, that is in us, or that we can be able, to have or to do, for to deserve the same: Christ himself only being the cause meritorious thereof."

If then all working and boasting be thus excluded, both by scripture and by the authority of our own church, how is this righteousness to be attained? The

prophet teaches us in the text. We receive it as the thirsty ground does the rain. Can we do any thing towards bringing down the gentle dew, or the fruitful rain of heaven? When the earth is parched and burnt up, can we command the clouds above to descend and saturate the thirsty soil? No. We are not equal to these things: any more than we can bring down the righteousness of Christ when we please. It is God's to give, ours to receive, as the dry ground does the rain. When God pours down from on high abundance of righteousness, what can we do but receive it as a free gift, and be thankful? This is the main point, and much stress should be laid upon it. We all want righteousness alike, being all alike sinners. Christ has infinite and perfect righteousness to give, and when we desire it, we should be sure to seek it in the way wherein God has appointed to bestow it. Now he always bestows it freely—not upon those who merit it, for then it would not be free—merit and free grace are opposites; but he bestows it upon the unrighteous and ungodly. He bestows it upon them who want it most, and who are sensible they can do the least to attain it. If then you desire righteousness, go as unrighteous and ungodly to the Lord Jesus, and he will clothe you with his all-perfect righteousness. He requires no qualification but to acknowledge that you have none. If you are sensible of your wants, that is a prevailing motive enough with him to supply them. To find that you want righteousness, is the proper way and means to attain it. Hear what your God promises you: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled"—ye shall be filled with it, because ye hunger and thirst after it, not because ye deserve it, and have merited it by your good works, but because you are made sensible that you cannot deserve or merit it. This is the established method of God's acting—"for he filleth the hungry with good things," but the rich Pharisees he sendeth empty away: he filleth them who hunger and thirst after righteousness with the good things of grace, and with the best things of glory; but he sendeth him, who says, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing—such a proud Pharisee he sendeth empty away.

It is exceedingly difficult to convince men that this is the gospel method of salvation. Their pride will not submit to it—no, not to be saved—by the righteousness of God: they will try, even after they are convinced of the necessity of God's righteousness, to add something of their own to it. Their fond conceit of themselves will not let them see how entirely their nature is corrupted, and how corrupt their best works are. Vicious self-love raises a thousand objections against free justification through Christ's righteousness: but there has been one made by men of corrupt minds in every age, and which they are still making, though God himself has vouchsafed to give it an answer. They object to this scripture doctrine, That it makes void the law, and renders an holy life needless. To which calumny God answers in the text. When he sends down a shower of righteousness from above, he says, let the earth open, and receive the heavenly blessing. But to what end? That it may continue as barren and unfruitful as before? No, but that such effects may follow in the spiritual world, as always do in the natural, when reviving showers descend upon the dry thirsty ground. Do not they always make the earth fruitful? So does the righteousness of Christ, as I proposed to show under my fourth and last remark, which was to prove what are the constant fruits of it.

"I Jehovah have created it," says God in the text. The righteousness of God is a new creation. And why are we created anew in Christ Jesus? That we may live still to the flesh and its corrupt appetites? No: for then we should be created anew in the devil, and not in Christ Jesus: but we are created anew unto good works. The righteousness of Christ is to deliver us from our sinful nature, and not to encourage us to live in it: for this is the will of God, even our sanctification. He gives us righteousness from heaven, that it may raise us up to heaven: for as it comes from God, it will carry us up to God. It will not remain in us as a dead and barren principle, but will make us fruitful in good works, even that we may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God the Father. This is the scripture account of the doctrine, and it is also the doctrine of our church. We read in the first part of the homily upon faith, "That as the light cannot be hid, but will show forth

itself at one place or another: so a true faith cannot be kept secret, but when occasion is offered, it will break out, and show itself by good works. And as the living body of a man ever exerciseth such things as belong to a natural and living body, for nourishment and preservation of the same, as it hath need, opportunity, and occasion, even so the soul, that hath a lively faith in it, will be doing always some good work, which shall declare that it is living, and will not be unoccupied. Therefore when men hear in the scripture so high commendations of faith, that it maketh us to please God, to live with God, and to be the children of God: if then they fancy, that they be set at liberty from doing all good works, and may live as they list, they trifle with God and deceive themselves. And it is a manifest token, that they be far from having the true and lively faith, and also far from knowing what true faith meaneth."

These are the words of our reformers—they speak of the true justifying faith agreeably to the sense of scripture, describing it to be an active operative grace, producing all the fair and ripe fruits of an holy life—these flow as constantly from it, as light does from the sun. If any man says he hath this faith, and does not make it manifest by these fruits, he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him. His faith is dead. It is no better than what the devils have, and unless it please God to open his eyes and to undeceive him, he will soon have his portion amongst them, who believe and tremble.

I have now finished the practical remarks which the text offered to our consideration, and I hope, my brethren, they have appeared to you with convincing evidence. The present and the eternal welfare of your own souls, as well as of theirs which are committed to your care, require you to meditate seriously upon this fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Our whole religion stands upon this great truth, that the righteousness for which we sinners are accepted as righteous at the bar of justice is not our own, but Christ's—wholly wrought out for us by his obedience and sufferings, and received of us by faith without any of our works or deservings. St. Paul has written two epistles in defence of this doctrine. If any man can read them without being convinced of the truth of it, he is out of the reach of argument. When the church of Rome denied the truth of it, and was fallen into the damnable doctrine of works being meritorious towards our justification, which is the ground-work of all their gross heresies and superstitions, it pleased God to raise up the reformers, who laboured chiefly to overthrow this fundamental error, and he blessed their labours with success. By their means, the knowledge of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ was spread abroad, and reached unto this land. Our church was happily reformed, as from all the errors of popery, so from the doctrine of the merit of works in particular. Long it stood upon the principles of the reformation, and these principles, glory be to God's good providence, are still in our articles, and homilies, and liturgy. But where else shall we find them? Who maintains them? Who writes, who preaches in their defence? Alas! they who should be their friends, betray them: for is there a more generally received opinion than that good works are the terms of our acceptance with God? Is not natural religion founded upon this opinion? And so far as men build upon it, they depart from the great doctrine of the reformation, and return back to popery. Is this our religious situation, or is it not? Let matter of fact speak. Are the celebrated books, in which youth are now lectured, written in the protestant spirit against the merit of works, and tending to establish the righteousness of Christ? Is this also the general scope of our preaching? Is it our righteousness, or God's that we seek to establish? Let experience answer. And it answers loud enough—We hear man's righteousness echoed from the pulpit and from the press; and in this protestant church, in this sound and best constituted church upon earth, too many of her sons have learned to reject the fundamental doctrine upon which she was established. When we are thus departing and falling away from our first principles, it seemed to me necessary to call upon you, as christian men to embrace, and as members of our church to defend, them. Whoever amongst us seeks justification through Christ's righteousness cannot be offended at what I have said—and I would offend those who seek for justification without Christ's righteousness. I would gladly stir them up and provoke them to examine their principles, and to try whether they can trust their

eternity upon them. If they trust to their own righteousness, they are lost for ever. If there be truth in God—if there be any reliance upon his word, there is no righteousness but Christ's, wherein sinners can appear without spot of sin at the bar of justice. This is the only clothing which can hide all their original and actual pollution. Trust to it, and God the Father will see you perfect in beauty, through the comeliness which Christ will put upon you. Reject it, and think of appearing before him with the least stain of sin, he is of purer eyes than to behold you. The least stain makes you unrighteous; and it is decreed, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Oh that his good Spirit may practically convince every one who hears me this day, of his want of some better righteousness than his own; and may he enable us to wait upon the Lord our righteousness, until the text be fulfilled in us—may he command the heavens from above to drop down, and the skies to pour forth righteousness—and may he command the earth, even our earthly sensual hearts, to open and to receive it, that salvation and righteousness may spring up together, with all their fair and ripe fruits. Grant this, blessed God and Father, to this whole congregation, through the all-perfect righteousness of thy Son Jesus Christ, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts, turning us from sin to righteousness, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit may be glorified in us, and by us, in time and in eternity. *Amen* and *Amen.*

THE DUTY OF PRAYING FOR OTHERS:

ENFORCED BY SOME ARGUMENTS TAKEN FROM THE SUCCESS OF THOSE PRAYERS WHICH THE CHURCH MADE FOR ST. PETER'S DELIVERANCE FROM PRISON.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.—James v. 16.

Peter therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.—Acts xii. 5.

HEROD, a persecutor of the church, stretched forth his hand to vex some of its members, and he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; and because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter also. He committed him to prison, chained him to two other persons, and gave him in charge to sixteen soldiers, who were, four at a time, night and day, to be keeping watch over him. And after Easter he intended to have put him to death; but on the very night before his execution, Peter is wonderfully delivered, contrary to Herod's purpose, the prisoner's hopes, and the keeper's intentions. By what means was this brought about? By the church's prayers. From the time Peter was apprehended, prayers were made without ceasing for him; and when the faithful knew his execution was fixed for the next day, they were resolved to wrestle all night with God in prayer for him. Accordingly they besiege the throne of grace with their earnest and hearty requests for Peter's deliverance, and they are heard. While they are praying, God gives in the prisoner among them, as an answer to their prayers.

Upon this fact I will make some practical remarks for the use of God's people at this time. What I shall offer at present relates only to true believers, and I hope God will put it unto their hearts to hear me with profit and improvement to their souls. My brethren, you see the distressed state of our affairs. All Europe is in confusion, our affairs are unsettled at home, and we are at war abroad, and with enemies who boast themselves in their victories and conquests. But the dearest thing to us is in the most danger. The protestant religion is ready to be de-

stroyed, and the Lord seems to have given us up to our bloody persecutors. Look around you, you see no prospect of deliverance by any human means: what course then shall we take? Whither shall we go for help? God must be our only refuge. If we can trust in him for deliverance, he will deliver us: and if we have any trust in him, we shall certainly express it in prayer. And for our encouragement to pray, and to expect a blessing upon our prayers, let us meditate upon the history before us: and may God so direct me to speak, and you to hear, that we may pray without ceasing, as they did in the text, until our success be like theirs. Oh that God would pour down upon us the spirit of prayer and supplication, and make us a praying people, until he deliver us from all our enemies, and make us an happy people. To this end, let us consider some of the chief practical uses to be made of the text. And

First, we may remark, That whenever the faithful are in any great danger or trouble, if God intends to deliver them, he puts it into their hearts to pray for deliverance. We have many examples of this in scripture, and many express passages, whereon to ground this doctrine. We are never able to pray aright without God's assistance. It is the office of the "Holy Spirit to help our infirmities; for we know not," says the apostle, "what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 26.) He helpeth our infirmities before we pray, by letting us see our wants; and he helpeth us in praying, by enabling us to pray with faith, and to ask what he knows our heavenly Father will grant us. Thus he puts it into their hearts to pray without ceasing for Peter's deliverance. If he had not helped their infirmities, every circumstance made so much against them, that they could have had no hopes from their prayers. But he strengthened their faith, and they looked beyond all difficulties. They saw a way open for Peter to escape, notwithstanding Herod's cruelty, the strictness and number of the guard, the closeness of the prison, and the nearness of Peter's death. They knew God was able, and they believed it would be for his glory, to deliver him, and therefore they prayed without ceasing.

My brethren, do you find yourselves stirred up much to prayer in the present troublesome times? Are your hearts greatly disposed to pray, that God would put an end to these troubles, and to preserve to us the blessings of the protestant religion? Do you spend much time with God, do you wrestle with him in prayer, resolved "not to let him go," until he hear and answer? If this be the case, we shall certainly be preserved. If the Lord's people be led out into fervent and earnest prayer, if they pray often alone, and often with one another, for the peace of our Jerusalem, then we need not despair. Though all things make against us, as they did in Peter's case, yet if God put it into our hearts to pray for deliverance, as he did into the hearts of the faithful, then we may promise ourselves the like blessed answer to our prayers, which they met with.

And this is my second practical remark. The prayer of faith never returns without a blessing. Peter is kept chained in prison, his enemies many, his friends few—his enemies have all earthly power in their hands to destroy him—his friends have only God to apply to for his deliverance, and to him they go. His enemies plot—his friends pray. Their plot against Peter's life, humanly speaking, could not be defeated—to-morrow he must die; but prayer brought down God to his assistance. The prison doors were safely shut, but prayer opened the doors of heaven: and God, to let us see the power of prayer, sent him to his friends while they were praying: as if God had said—There (since you will take no denial) there he is; thus plainly pointing out the means of his deliverance. The prayer of Elijah had the same success. He could open and shut heaven. And if the prayer of one righteous man could avail so much, what could not the joint prayer of many righteous men do? It will bear down all before it, and prevail in heaven and earth. It would reach up to God, and lie before the throne of his grace, and never depart without its answer; and when answered, it would come down with authority, and force all human power to submit. The scripture every where speaks of the efficacy of prayer. The promise of God to it is very encouraging. "Call upon me in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me." I will give thee reason to praise me, by delivering thee

from thy trouble. And God has ever fulfilled this promise. There is not an instance in scripture of the church's joining in a common petition to God, but he always heard and answered it. And indeed how should it fail of success, being indited by the Holy Spirit, and presented by Jesus Christ, and perfumed with the sweet incense of his merits? It then becomes the prayer of Jesus Christ himself. He presents it as his own, and how can God the Father reject the prayer of his beloved Son? So far from rejecting it, he represents it to be as delightful to him as the most fragrant odours are to us. For thus St. John, speaking of our Lord under the character of the angel of the covenant, says, Rev. viii. "There was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne, and the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up (with acceptance) before God out of the angel's hand." Let your prayers ascend up with the sweet-smelling savour of his merits, and you have his word of promise, that whatever you shall ask the Father in his name, you shall receive.

Now, my Christian friends and brethren (for to such only I am now speaking), since you are convinced of these truths, are you careful to practise them? Let us look back, and each of us examine our own consciences. How much time have we spent of this day in prayer for the distresses of our fellow-creatures? Many are in prison, have we prayed for them? Several Christians are in distress, our reformed brethren persecuted in France, our brethren, in blood as well as in faith, suffering in America, the Christian world in war and confusion, and the Protestant interest nearly destroyed; have we been earnest with God this day in prayer, that he would put an end to all these calamities? How justly may God leave us destitute of his help, if we have not been pleading with him for help for others? And if there be any one of us whose conscience now informs him that he has not sympathized and suffered this day with all the suffering members of Christ, let such a man now humble himself and say, Oh Lord, do not excommunicate me out of the hearts of thine, for my coldness towards them: how shall I expect help from others' prayers, who have been wanting in my prayers for them? Where was my fervent brotherly love, that I would not do that for a brother, which I owe to an enemy, *viz.* to pray for him. Oh Lord forgive the offence of thy servant, and pour down upon me the spirit of prayer and supplication. This done, resolve not to close your eyes this night, until you have improved your interest in God. You have a key that will open any lock, let no Christians lie in chains by you, either in bodily or spiritual chains. If he be sick, pray him into health. If poor, pray him rich. If troubled in mind, pray him into comfort. It is for want of our prayers that men lie so long under their burdens. If we would jointly commend them unto God, he would either deliver them, or, what is the same, he would sanctify and sweeten the affliction, and make it as great a blessing as a deliverance. If you can do nothing else, pray for your brethren. You may not have other means of helping them, but the poorest Christian has an interest with God, and if he use it in prayer, it will do them and him a real service: for prayer in this case for others, is a clearer evidence of grace, than prayer for ourselves.

Since the times then so loudly call upon us, let us join in prayer for all those that are troubled in mind, body, or estate; and that we may appear as the members of one body, actuated by the same spirit under one head, let us all agree, at whatever distance we may happen to be, at one and the same hour to meet together at the throne of grace. And what hour can we pitch upon more proper for this sacred employment, and more free from worldly avocations, than from eight o'clock to nine on the Lord's Day evening? The attendance upon the public offices of the day is then over. The mind is collected and serious. By what more likely means can we hope to keep it in the same sweet frame, than to close the day with an act of devotion? If God's people would enter into an holy league, and oblige themselves to spend this part of the day in their several closets during these troublesome times, they would infallibly succeed in their petitions. Tell me, whenever the church's joint prayers did miscarry, in what place, in what case, or for what people? There is not an instance wherein they failed. Prayers have been made for men in the church (good men and bad) and for men out of

the church—and they have succeeded. Prayers have been made by land and upon the sea, and with success—they have prevailed above-ground, under-ground, in dens, and caves, and dungeons. Prayers have relieved dying men, poor men, prisoners, and captives; they have been made for men against temptations and sorrows, against the rage of persecutors and devils, and they have prevailed; and why should not prayer be as omnipotent now, as it has been formerly? Suppose our national sins cry aloud for vengeance, let our prayers cry louder for mercy. When one Elijah stood up for stiff-necked Israel, and one Amos for rebellious Judah, God showed mercy; and Elijah and Amos were men of like passions with us: encouraged by their success, let us be importunate at the throne of grace, while God allows us an hour for prayer. And let none of us be discouraged as if it was too late; our danger indeed is great, but while God calls in his word, it is not too late to call to him in prayer. He often sees men sinking, before he comes to their help. Our extremity is his opportunity. When Peter is within a few hours of death, then is God's time to deliver him.

But perhaps some of you may say, I have been praying and waiting long, and yet see no success. So did the church. They pray for Peter week after week, without ceasing night or day, and still the prison is shut and his chains are on. And now they have but one night more to wait, and they wait and pray, until Peter comes in among them. If then we have but one day, or one hour more to spend, let us spend it in prayer, not doubting but the God that heareth prayer will answer. Deliverance will come, be it at the last hour, if the prayer of faith wait for it. Experience, and the word of God, prove it ever was so, and it ever shall. Dispute not then, only believe. Go and open thy wants to God as thy reconciled Father, ask a supply of Christ God-man, thy Saviour and Mediator, through God the Holy Ghost as the inditer of thy prayers. Set thy faith to work. Before thou begin, say with the prophet, I will call, and the Lord will answer; and when thou hast finished, believe that in due time and manner thou shalt be answered. Thus pray, let faith enter into thy suit, and end, and subscribe it, and God will as soon deny himself, as deny thee thy heart's desire.

But this point deserves farther consideration. Many serious, well-meaning persons are very apt to be discouraged at God's delay in granting their requests. Let us go to the history before us for light into this particular, and let this be the third practical use to be made of the text. The church had been long at prayers, but God did not answer till the last hour. That was his time, which is always the best. If he does not answer immediately, he delays for wise and good reasons. He would remind us of our former behaviour to him. How often did he call by mercies, by judgments, and by his word, but we would not hear. He prayed us again and again to leave our sins, and come to him, but we would not answer, therefore it is a just reproof, that we should call, and not be heard. God seems not to hear, to spur us on to pray the more earnestly. He seems deaf, that we might speak out, and slow, that we might be earnest. Thus Daniel interprets it in the ninth chapter. God defers and delays, says he, but it is only to try me: therefore he prays with more warmth and fervour, "Oh Lord, hear; oh Lord, forgive; oh Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, oh my God." And he goes on praying with so much vehemence, that while he was yet speaking the angel Gabriel is sent unto him with an answer. Though God delay, yet he will answer. And if his delays begin to discourage us, let us study the course of his providence, and be comforted to wait on. Behold how the husbandman waits. He does not think of sowing and reaping the same day But his corn lies buried for some time, and dies, yea it grows downward, before it shoots upward; and when it is up, it receives many a check: yet still he waits, because he hath experience. So must we. When we have sown our seed, and our prayers seem to be buried and dead, and all things appear worse with us after prayer than they were before, yet we should wait, and learn experience from our own and other men's success. Never was the seed of prayer sown, but there was a crop, although it was a late harvest.

I wish the harvest was come, says one, I have been praying long, and without success. How long have you prayed? Abraham prayed thirty years for a child; Isaac prayed twenty: but their prayers were heard at last. How long did

the faithful pray for the incarnation of the Lord of life?—four thousand years before he came. And yet he did come; therefore pray on.

But you have used all means, prayed yourself, got others to pray for you, and yet you have no answer. And might not Peter have said the same? There was not a Christian in Jerusalem but had been praying for him, and yet still he is in prison.

But you think matters go worse with you, the more you pray: the more you pray for faith, the less you have; the more you pray against temptations, the more they beset you. Is not this as we said, the corn must go backward before it comes forward? Was it not so with Abraham and Sarah? The longer they prayed the older they grew.

But you think your sins grow stronger by prayer. No! this cannot be. Only you feel sin more than you did before. It is not because sin is stronger, but because you are sounder: for these motions of sin are not motions of life, but symptoms of death. Take comfort: the pangs of death are now upon your lusts; they are struggling for life. Keep on your prayers, and soon you will have a happy deliverance.

But you say, your comforts come too late, I am quite wearied out. Never say it is too late, so long as God bids you pray, and you can pray, and God's people have hearts to pray for you. If Peter be delivered by midnight or by daybreak, it is as well as if he had been out a month before. God does not delay, because he will not grant, but because he would quicken you, and stir you up to ask with greater earnestness. If your petition be not according to his will, never make it; but if it be, never leave it. Keep on praying, as they did in the text, until Peter came in among them. Remember the poor widow, and learn from her not to be faint or weary in your prayers—she had to deal with a judge, and not a father—a hard rigorous judge, and she was alone, a simple orator, and yet she carried her suit by her importunity. If a judge, that neither feared God nor regarded man, could thus be won, shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, although he bear long with them? What an encouragement is this to continuance in prayer, though God should delay long! We here see that his delays are not denials. Oh Lord! help our faith, that having precept, promise, God's servants, God's own blessed Son, on our side, we may never be put off with any delay; but may have strength to keep on our suit, so long as an hour or a minute is left. Let us pray with faith and patience, not doubting but God will bring about our deliverance, not only after delays, but after all human means fail: which is the fourth circumstance in the history before us worthy of our attention.

Many persons are apt to be stumbled when they see no outward means of deliverance. Although they have the word of promise in their hands, yet they are tempted to think their case desperate, when they see no way open to escape. And when this comes after many and long delays, it is often discouraging. But we should consider that the Lord never wants means. St. Peter had good reason to say from his own experience, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver his people."—He is never at a loss. If they know how to pray, he always knows how to deliver. His wisdom is infinite to find out means, his power is almighty to carry them into execution, nay, if need be, to create them. He is the Lord of hosts: all creatures and all elements obey him. If we want his help at land or sea, he is Lord of all. If we be in prison, he can open any jail. He can make strangers and enemies, yea all things, work together for our good. Look not then at the want of means, but at his promise, who can work without means and against means. Cast thy care upon God, and he will care for thee. Is thy burden poverty? Cast it upon him, and he will help thee. Is it sin or sorrow? Whatever it be, he can bear it, and discharge thee.

But still thou art afraid, thou seest no means. Suppose they had reasoned, in Peter's case, as thou dost? If we had a friend at court to use his interest with Herod, or if we had a friend in the watch whom we could bribe, or if the jailor would suffer us to come at Peter, then we might have some hopes; but now all human means fail us, why need we pray any longer? They had more faith than to reason in this manner. They knew that God had means out of

our reach. If men could not deliver Peter, an angel should. If thou believest, he will find or create means to deliver thee. All things are possible to him that believeth.

But thou seest so many difficulties in the way, that thy case seems desperate, and it is not possible to help thee. What are difficulties to him, who speaks the word, and all nature obeys? His power is shut out of no place, and is every where almighty, Does thy case require more power than Peter's did? Go to the prison, there is a strong guard. Pass the guard, there is a door. Pass it, there is a chain. Get through it, there is an iron gate—and come at last to Peter, he is chained fast to two men. What do all these avail against God? If Peter's friends can break through all these discouragements to prayer, God will break through these and a thousand more to their comfort.

"Oh, but," says weak faith, "God works no wonders at present." No? What, is not his name still the wonderful God? Is not his power and his wisdom as great as ever? Are not his promises as good? Is not his love, and our want of it, as much as ever? Have we not still the same loving Saviour, and the same interest in him? All things stand as they did before. And if we use the former means, we shall infallibly find the former success, and God will do exceeding abundantly above all that we can either ask or think. We have the Lord's promise for this, and our own experience. What man is there any way acquainted with God and this holy duty, who ever found his prayers unsuccessful? When didst thou ever speak to thy heavenly Father, but he answered thee with some ease or some comfort? When didst thou ever pray, but thy heart was somewhat refreshed? Fear not then but the Lord will still do wonders. Is any thing too hard for God? Has he made any promise that he cannot perform? No, certainly. Faith finds no variableness in him nor shadow of turning, but experiences him to be the God that heareth prayer, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

The history would afford many more practical remarks, but here I stop. Let these four suffice. First, when God intends to deliver his people out of any trouble, he puts it into their hearts to pray for deliverance. Secondly, their prayers are always successful—although, thirdly, God delays to give them an answer for some time. And fourthly, when he does answer, he wants no means to bring about his gracious purposes. My Christian brethren, consider these particulars with attention, and see whether there be not great reason for you to beg of God that he would give you at this time the spirit of prayer and supplication. If he does not make us a praying people, it may be feared that he will give us over to destruction; for look around you. See the troubles of Europe. Does not your heart bleed for the shedding of so much Christian blood? Examine the state of the Christian churches. What coldness and deadness is there in some? And how greatly are they, who have a little life, opposed and persecuted? Consider the danger that threatens the Protestant interest. Are not these so many loud calls upon you to use your interest with God, that he would put a stop to these general calamities. And then look around this kingdom, and see whether it does not stand in need of your prayers; is there any corner of the island, wherein vice does not abound? And does not the number of swearers and cursers far exceed the number of those who mourn and pray; yea, so far, that I fear for one prayer, there are a thousand oaths and profane curses? And though God has been punishing us, yet we are neither reformed nor humbled. We neither deny ourselves our diversions nor our sins. Long have we been declining, and now our friends abroad and at home are encompassed with sins so provoking, with enemies so numerous and mighty, that we are brought to this extremity, we must either make our way through all by prayer, or else we perish. The imagination of man cannot devise how we should long subsist under our pressing evils, unless we call in mercy and help from heaven. Let us then make God our refuge and strength, and we shall find him a very present help in trouble. Let so many of us as know what our interest is in God, and what the power of prayer is, now in earnest address ourselves to this duty. And we need not fear, but since God allows us a time for prayer, he will also find a time for our deliverance from all our troubles.

But here is our greatest danger—the Lord's people are not stirred up to be hearty and earnest in praying to see an end of these troubles. There seems to be among them a great coolness and backwardness to the duty. This is the worst sign of the times. We have but one remedy, and that we do not take. My Christian friends and brethren, if this be your case, beg of God to give you the spirit of prayer and supplication. I have been urging you by several motives to do your duty in these troublesome times; you see and know what it is, now go and practise it. Your weapon is prayer, may God give you grace to use it. If you use it with faith, it will prevail, yea, it will be almighty, in heaven and earth. Whatever you want, prayer can supply you. Do you want your corruptions abated? Pray against them. Would you have your graces increased? Pray for them. Would you have the afflicted churches comforted, and our own church and kingdom restored to peace and tranquillity? You may relieve them by prayer. If God intends to try us with greater troubles and persecutions, prayer is necessary, that you may be fitted for them. On all these accounts you cannot but see that there is great need of prayer, and if you do pray, that there are great hopes of success. Oh, then, let us lay aside all trifling matters, and attend strictly to this. Let us leave off so much talking about what belongs to statesmen, let our subject be what belongs to private Christians. Let us pray more, and talk less. Let us speak more to God, and less of men. Speak as much as you will for men, but say nothing against them out of an ordinance. Whatever you have to say against them, let it be in prayer to God for them. This is the Christian's duty, and God grant it may be the Christian's practice.

Let me leave this one consideration upon your minds. When the public exercises of the Lord's Day are ended, take up the bible, and read the history we have been meditating upon. See whether it does not contain more encouragements to pray for the peace of our Jerusalem than I have now used—and while your heart is warm with the subject, put it in practice. Go to the throne of grace at the appointed hour, and use your interest with him that sitteth upon the throne. Do not spend your evening in talking of other men's matters, but mind your own duty. The less they mind theirs, the more should you pray for them. And instead of prating, as I hear many professors of religion prate, "Oh that we might have more public fasts, more public meetings for prayer, more general reformations, &c.;" get thee into thy closet, and set about thy own reformation as soon as thou wilt. Pray and fast, as long as thou wilt, and the more thou growest in grace, the more wilt thou pray for others, as well as thyself. Let us all, then, with one heart and one voice now begin, and God grant we may pray without ceasing, as they did in the text, until we obtain the like deliverance. And what sweeter, what more suitable, what more devout words can we find wherewith to conclude, than the collect of our church for this day?

"Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth, mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION PRECIOUS IN THE HOUR OF DEATH:

PROVED IN

A SERMON

PREACHED JANUARY 4, 1759, UPON THE DEATH OF THE REV. JAMES HERVEY, RECTOR OF WESTON FAVEL IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Righteousness delivereth from death.—Prov. x. 2.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.—Luke ii. 29, 30.

According to the ancient prophecies, in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son. He came to his own when there was a general expectation of his birth. Many just and devout persons in Jerusalem were then looking out for the Redeemer's coming in the flesh, and among them good old Simeon, and Anna, a prophetess, are particularly mentioned. St. Luke says, "There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just, a justified person, and devout, fearing to offend God," as the Greek word signifies, waiting for the consolation of Israel; he was waiting for the incarnation of the divine Comforter, by whose birth all the promises of comfort were to be ratified and fulfilled, and the Israel of God was to receive everlasting consolation. The Lord was pleased to vouchsafe a particular revelation of his will in this matter to Simeon: "for the Holy Spirit was upon him, and it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ incarnate." And he came by direction of the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the holy child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God that he had lived to this happy hour, when he could take up the prophet's words, and say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." Simeon waited to see God incarnate, and having seen him, he waited to live no longer. He desired his dismission. All the ends of living were answered, and therefore he put up this sweet prayer—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

With these same words one of our dear brethen, now with the Lord, finished his course. They were the dying words of the Reverend Mr. James Hervey. He had long desired to depart, and to be with Christ, which he knew was far better than to abide in the flesh, but he waited patiently for the Lord's time; and when it was come, he thus expressed the thankfulness of his heart, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy most holy and comfortable word: for mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation." The Lord heard him, and gave him a gentle dismission. He died as he had lived, in a perfectly even and calm composure of mind. Death showed that he came to him as a friendly messenger to call him to glory, for he cheerfully obeyed the summons. There was no fear, no struggle, not a sigh or groan; but he departed in peace, and in full assurance of faith. Oh that you and I, my brethren, may so live by the faith of the Son of God, that when we come to die, we may be able to use this same prayer, and may receive of the Lord a like gracious answer.

These sweet dying words of our dear brother have made a great impression upon several of his acquaintance: for they have been led to consider them more

closely than perhaps they ever did before, and several have meditated upon them with great comfort. In order that others might do the same, and that his happy death might be the means of stirring up many to seek to die the death of the righteous, and that their latter end might be like his, I have determined to speak upon the words this day. May the same Spirit by which Simeon spake them be in all your hearts. May he teach you their true and full meaning, and in God's due time may he give you the comfortable experience of them. Under his guidance let us consider,

First, That when Simeon had seen the salvation of God, he was prepared to depart;

Secondly, He therefore desired it, and prayed for it; and

Thirdly, He expected he should depart in peace according to God's word, which was fulfilled to him; and under each of these particulars I shall speak of the experience of our deceased brother.

First, Simeon had it revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ, and when Jesus was brought into the temple he was directed to go and receive him for the promised Messiah, and taking him up in his arms, he blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It is evident he spoke these words in their primary sense of his seeing Jesus with the eyes of his body; but this could have been no great cause of joy to him, unless he had before seen Christ some other way; for multitudes saw him with their bodily eyes, while he was upon earth, who were no better for the sight; and multitudes will hereafter see him in his glorified body, but it will be to their everlasting confusion. There is another kind of sight, to which our church referred you this afternoon, when each of you took up these words and said, "for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." If you knew what you said, and spoke the truth as you had experienced it, you meant that you had seen the salvation of God with the eye of faith; according to what is said of Moses, "That by faith he saw him who is invisible," (Heb. xi. 27.) He saw him by the eyes of his soul, who was invisible to the eyes of his body: for the soul has its eyes as well as the body, but sin darkened them: it put them into the state in which the eyes of the body are, when they have no light; then they can see nothing. So the soul is said in scripture to be in darkness and blindness, until the eyes of the understanding be enlightened. They cannot see any spiritual objects until the Sun of Righteousness shine upon them; nor when he does shine, can they see any loveliness in those objects, until they be able to act faith upon them; for the eye of faith not only beholds the object, but also distinguishes its own interest in it. Faith keeps all the senses of the soul in act and exercise upon the proper object which each apprehends; here the eye of faith is fixed upon salvation, not only viewing it as a blessing belonging to others, but also appropriating it to itself, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" here Simeon speaking of our Saviour calls him Salvation, because all salvation is in and from him. He is the author, and he is the finisher of it. The great plan of it was laid by the co-equal and co-eternal persons of the ever-blessed Trinity before the foundation of the world; it was carried into execution by our divine Saviour in the fulness of time, and his is an eternal salvation, an eternal deliverance from all evil, and an eternal possession of all good. Upon the entrance of sin into the world this great salvation of our God was revealed, and, by faith, believers under the Old Testament dispensation, enjoyed the benefits of it. At the appointed time Jehovah took a body of flesh, and our divine Immanuel stood up to save his people from their sins. He undertook to satisfy all the demands of law and justice. The law he satisfied by paying it a perfect unsinning obedience, which being a divine as well as a human obedience, did therefore magnify the law, and make it more honourable, than if all the creatures in heaven and earth had never offended against it. Justice he satisfied by enduring the threatened punishment, and after his sufferings and death, justice had no more demands upon him; for he came out of the prison of the grave with a full discharge. This satisfaction made to law and justice, by the obedience and sufferings of the Lord Jesus, is what the

scripture calls the Righteousness of God, because it is a divine and infinitely perfect righteousness, a divine righteousness wrought out by Jehovah himself, and as infinitely perfect a righteousness as Jehovah could make it. In this all-glorious righteousness of the God-man Christ Jesus consists the sinner's salvation; for he is accepted and justified by it: the fruits of this righteousness are his sanctification, and the robe of this righteousness is his glorification. So that salvation in time and in eternity depends upon the righteousness of the incarnate God. This is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, for which our dear brother was a noble champion. He saw, he experienced the importance of it, and therefore in his conversation and in his preaching it was his favourite topic. How sweetly, how profitably have I heard him dwell upon it, and how excellently has he defended it in his writings? Read his Theron and Aspasio, and when you are thoroughly convinced that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth, and can say with faith, "in the Lord have I righteousness and salvation," then your mind will be settled in peace and comfort, and you will be delivered from those dangerous errors which are now propagated concerning the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Thank God for the masterly defence of it in these dialogues.* In them Mr. Hervey, being dead, yet speaketh the praises of his adorable Redeemer, and clearly proves that we have our salvation through his righteousness. Immanuel the Saviour is the justifier, as he says himself, (Isa. xlv. 21, 22.) "There s no God else beside me; a God that gives righteousness and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." How could they be saved by looking unto Christ? Certainly not by a look of their bodily eyes. Simeon's joy did not arise from having Christ in his arms, and looking upon him; but from being able to look upon him by an act of faith. He knew him to be his Saviour. Thence arose his joy, and from thence must yours arise. It is the look of faith which saves; the eye of faith kept in exercise upon its proper object, even upon Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith. It is this act of faith which our Lord requires—"Look unto me," with this promise annexed, "and be ye saved." There is salvation in the look of faith: for it sees and receives Jesus, as he is offered in scripture, for a free, full, and complete Saviour. And whoever keeps the eye of faith in constant exercise, is prepared with good old Simeon to depart in peace; because, by having an interest and property in the salvation of our God, he is thereby delivered from every thing that can make death dreadful, and is in possession of every that can make death desirable.

What is it that makes death dreadful? Is it not guilt in the conscience accusing the sinner for the breach of the holy law, and alarming him with fear and threatened punishment, which the justice, and holiness, and truth of God are concerned to see inflicted, in time and in eternity? Thus we read, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." Death has power to sting, so long as the broken law gives sin a right to accuse and condemn: all unpardoned sinners therefore are afraid of death. From this state of fear and bondage our Lord came to save his people: "he came to deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage;" and he does deliver them when their sins are forgiven, and his righteousness is imputed to them: for then the broken law cannot condemn, nor justice punish, there being no condemnation

* About a week before Mr. Hervey was taken ill, I mentioned to him a report that was spread about, concerning Mr. Sandeman's Letters upon Theron and Aspasio, to this effect: that he (Mr. Hervey) had written a letter to Mrs. Cooke, and therein had said, That Mr. Sandeman was in the right, and had convinced him of his error; or words to that purpose. To which he answered, That he had written a letter to Mrs. Cooke, and therein he had acknowledged that many of Mr. Sandeman's remarks were judicious, and that he had corrected some of his expressions and inaccuracies. But he said, That he was very far from having changed his opinion as to the substance and matter of the argument; for therein he thought Mr. Sandeman was entirely wrong. Whereupon I desired he would insert an advertisement in some of the London papers, signed by himself, to set this mistake right, lest it might hinder the sale and reading of his books, and thereby prevent much good. To which he agreed; and added, that he would let that paragraph stand in his Answer to Mr. Wesley, relating to Mr. Sandeman, only softening the expression a little; but all this was prevented by his illness and death. The truth of this I am ready to attest.—ABRAHAM MADOCK, *curate of Weston Favel.*

to them that are in Christ Jesus. Upon which death loses its sting; and when the pardoned sinner looks upon it, he sees nothing terrible in its appearance, but can boldly and without presumption, say, "Yea, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou, my God, art with me."

And he is not only prepared to die because he is delivered from every thing that could make death dreadful, but also because he is in the possession of every thing that can make death desirable. He knows he has an interest in Christ, and Christ is the possessor of heaven and earth. He has all things in his hands, and has promised to make them all work together for the good of his redeemed people: so that whoever has Christ, has all things. "All things," says the apostle, "are yours, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours." And the reason follows, "and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." As all that Christ has is yours, and all that God has is Christ's; consequently all is yours. And death by name is yours: no longer a curse and a punishment, but turned into a real blessing: for it is the gate and entrance, through which you pass into endless life and never-fading glory.

Thus he is prepared to depart, who has seen with the eye of faith the salvation of God. The doctrine is clear from scripture; but how is it, my brethren, in your experience? Are you prepared to depart? And on what do you build your preparation? On the Lord Jesus, or on what? Search and see, for nothing can comfort you in the hour of death, but having received him into your hearts by faith and love. You must see his salvation, and be able to keep the eye of faith intent upon it, before you can be prepared to depart; but when this is your happy case, then, in whatever shape death comes, you will be able to say with our dear brother, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He might well say, Mine eyes have seen thy salvation: for all that came near him were convinced that he had seen it. The effects showed it. He had put off the old man, and had put on the new, and was under the influence of divine love to his adorable Saviour. The love of Jesus ruled in his heart, and was therefore constantly uppermost in his mouth. He loved to be telling of his salvation all the day long. And he did not talk like a professor full of mere head knowledge; but what he spake had a warmth, and life, and power in it, which showed that it came from his heart. He was perfectly inflamed with the love of his divine Lord and Master; and if you sat any time in his company, you could not help catching some of the holy flame. So that if strangers to his person may doubt of his experience of a Saviour's love, we who have conversed with him cannot. We are sure from what we saw and heard, that he had seen the salvation of God, and therefore was prepared to depart. He knew in whom he had believed, and was certain the power and the love of the dear Immanuel were in his interest; so that neither death, nor he that had the power of death, could hurt him.

A friend of mine was much with him on the 15th of December, and the discourse turned upon what Christ had done for his soul. Mr. Hervey spake strongly and earnestly of the assurance of his faith, and of the great love of God in Christ to him. He declared that the fear of death was taken from him; and it afterwards appeared, that death had no sting to hurt, nor the grave any power to get victory over him: for when death came, it found his mind in perfect peace. He had no uneasy apprehensions of dying, but had hopes full of glory and immortality. Doubtless, then, he had seen the salvation of God. The knowledge of salvation had been precious to him in life, and therefore he experienced the preciousness of it in death: for then he could give thanks to God for giving him the victory through Jesus Christ his Lord. Happy are they to whom God has given the knowledge of their salvation; they believe, on good grounds, that their Saviour has brought them into a state of salvation; and therefore they are prepared to meet death, yea they can desire and pray for it, as Simeon did: which is the second particular I was to consider.

Simeon knowing that he was prepared, therefore desired to depart. And this is the believer's case. He longs for death, not out of an impatient, discontented temper, but out of a real holy affection. When worldly men are oppressed with

troubles on all sides, and see no way to escape, they are apt to desire death, that it may bring their misery to an end, and put them out of their pain. And there are some most miserable and abject cowards, who murder themselves to get rid of the troubles of life. These men court death as a less evil, but the believer desires it as a real blessing. He knows that his death will be to the glory of his Saviour, for it grieves him to the heart, that he should ever do any thing displeasing to such a kind benefactor After receiving so many tokens of Christ's love, oh it is indeed afflicting to give him the least offence. I appeal to yourselves. You that have the love of Jesus in your hearts, are not you sorry that you love him so little? Have not you reason daily to mourn for your ingratitude to him? And what will such thoughts suggest, but a desire to be, where the very occasion of offence will be removed? It was on this account that Mr. Hervey desired death; for the last morning of his life, when his brother came in to inquire after his welfare, he said, I have been thinking of my great ingratitude to my God. And these thoughts made him wish to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And he desired it as Simeon did, and all believers do, upon another motive, namely, because the Lord will get himself honour, by the honour which he will give to his people in his kingdom. He will be glorified, says the apostle, in his saints; he will get himself glory by the great glory which he will bestow upon them. And as the believer has in all things an eye to God's glory, so has he especially in his desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ. He knows that God is glorified in him, and by him at present; but then it is imperfectly, and that grieves him. Self, or the creature, will be trying to share the heart with God, and thereby to rob him of his glory. A bare thought of this, when only rising in the mind, hurts the believer. He would have every thought brought into subjection to Christ, and that makes him desire to be, where temptation and sin shall be no more, and where he shall glorify God, and God shall be glorified in him for ever and ever. With this view Mr. Hervey desired to depart. His great love to his Saviour's glory made him wish for death. He longed to be dissolved, that he might be freed from the frailties and infirmities of this mortal life, under which he laboured, and could not always, nor in a perfect degree, promote the glory of his redeeming God: therefore he desired to be with them who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and are ever receiving glory from him, and ever giving glory to him. And the Lord granted his desire. He literally answered his prayer, for he departed in peace, according to the word of God; as I purposed to show under my third head.

What it is to be at peace with God, and to depart with a sense of this peace upon our minds, I cannot better express than in the excellent words of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, in his nine sermons, p. 132. "The peace of God is that sense of being in friendship with him, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him, which passeth all understanding, exceeds the conceptions of those who have not experienced it, and will exceed hereafter the present conceptions of those who have." And the believer, even when he is departing this life, has a sense of his being in friendship with God, and has a feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him. This is promised in scripture, and this is fulfilled to them who being justified by faith have peace with God. Being reconciled to the Father through the Son of his love, they live and they die in peace.

I suppose some weak in the faith are thinking thus within themselves: "Well, is it so, that true believers die in peace and joy? I am sure I could not at present; for I am dreadfully afraid of death: and what would not I give to be delivered from these fears! for they make my life miserable." My brethren, why are you in bondage to them? God offers you deliverance. There are many general promises in his word, that, let what will happen to believers, the peace of God shall rule in their hearts. Thus Isaiah xxvi. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee." And as it is a perfect, so it is a continual peace. "The Lord of peace himself," says the apostle, (2 Thess. iii. 16,) "give you peace always by all means:" for after he has once given this peace, he makes all means, even the most unlikely, tend to the promoting of it; therefore death

can by no means weaken, and much less destroy, this peace of God. These general promises he fulfilled to the patriarchs; for St. Paul says, Heb. xi. 13, "That they all died in faith." They acted faith in their death, and consequently had a sweet sense of the peace of God in their hearts, when they died. David shows us the reason of their dying in faith, Psalm xlviii. 14, "This God is our God for ever and ever, he shall be our guide even unto death." They knew that their God would be with them to guide and keep them, when the body returned to dust, and the spirit returned to God who gave it: and therefore David spoke for himself, what each of them also could say—"When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, because thou, my God, art then with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me even then." (Psalm xxiii. 3.) With this faith they looked upon death as disarmed of its sting and power to hurt, and therefore they laid down their heads, and fell asleep in the arms of death with as much composure as any weary traveller ever longed for rest. They fell asleep. The scripture speaks of their death under this beautiful image, to teach us that death was as sweet to them as ever sleep was to a hard-labouring man. The faithful fell asleep quietly and composedly. And how should it be otherwise? They had no evil to fear: for they were at peace with God. And what could death do to hurt that peace? It does indeed dissolve all other bonds, but it strengthens this. It is the happy instrument of fastening the bond of peace with a tie, which never, never can be dissolved. And when the faithful look upon death in this light, what is there in it but joy and peace, even a joy unspeakable, and a peace that surpasseth all understanding?

Perhaps some of you think, this is not always the case, because there are very good men who have had strong conflicts and struggles before death. Nay, my brethren, think not so wickedly of God. Is it according to his word that the faithful shall depart in peace, and do they not? What! can the word of God be broken? No. It shall stand fast for ever and ever; and in the case which you state, it does not follow that this peace is weakened or destroyed, because it is tempted. By no means. The sense of this peace may remain, when it is most furiously attacked: for it is the peace of God. God gave it, and God keeps it, and he may suffer the devil to tempt, but not to destroy it. The more it is tempted, the more honour redounds to God for preserving it in the fiery trial. It was more to God's glory to preserve his children in the fiery furnace, than to have kept them out of it. Doubtless he that has the power of death will make his last efforts, and try to shake the faith of the dying believer. The devil will then set upon him with all his fury. But though he be a roaring lion, yet he is chained, and the Almighty Saviour so over-rules his malice and rage, that he makes them work together for his glory and his people's good: as he did remarkably in the last efforts which the enemy made against our dear brother. He saw him in great weakness of body, and then made a furious onset against his faith; but the dear Immanuel was with him, and would not give him over into the enemy's hands. His faith was tried, and it came like gold out of the fire. He knew that it would be tried, and had therefore prepared himself for the fiery trial. Speaking of it to a faithful minister of Christ, who was often with him in his last sickness, he said—"How many precious texts are there, big with the rich truths of Christ, which we do not comprehend, which we know nothing of; and of those which we do know, how few do we remember? *Bonus textuarius est bonus theologus*, and that is the armour. The word of God is the sword, these texts are the weapons which I must use when that subtile spirit, that arch-adversary of mankind, comes to tempt and sift me in my last conflict. Surely I had need be well provided with these weapons, I need have my quiver full of them, to answer Satan with texts out of the word of God, when he assaults me." Satan did assault him, but found him prepared and armed. Mr. Hervey said to his friends the day that he died, "Oh you know not how great a conflict I have." And after he had sat for some time with his eyes constantly lift up towards heaven, and his hands clasped together in a praying form, he said—"Now this great conflict is over." Jesus made him conqueror over all the powers of darkness; having endeavoured to rob him of his peace, but in vain, they left him in the Saviour's arms, never more to be tempted; and he watched over him with

the tenderest love, until he took him home. And when he went, he indeed departed in peace. His body seemed to be ready as well as his soul. When death came, he had not one struggle with it. There was not a single groan or sigh, or any thing that could show the least unwillingness to depart. He had such a gentle dismission as he had prayed for in Simeon's words. He departed in peace, and fell asleep.

I have now finished what I had to offer upon the three particulars mentioned in my text, and it appears, that when a sinner is convinced of his want of a Saviour, and is convinced that Jesus is such a Saviour as he wants, able and willing to save to the uttermost, and when he is made to see his interest in the perfect complete righteousness of this adorable Saviour, and is assured of it from the word and Spirit of God, and from the fruits of righteousness produced in his life and conversation, then he is prepared to die; then he may desire it with submission to God's will, and whenever death comes, he may expect to depart in peace, according to the word of God. These great truths I have illustrated from scripture and from experience, more especially from the experience of our dear brother, now with the Lord, of whom I have spoken nothing more, than what the words of my text naturally led me to say. If I were to attempt to draw the character of this excellent man, I would consider him in the several relations in which he stood to God and man, and would exhort you to follow him, so far as he followed Christ. But the compass of this discourse will not suffer me to enlarge. I can only just observe some particular instances, from whence it will evidently appear that he had seen the salvation of God. He had a clear view of it by the eye of faith, and was able to act faith upon it, for his was a faith working by love. "We love God," says the beloved apostle, "because he first loved us;" because we know by faith that he first loved us: so that our love is the reflex act of his love to us. And Mr. Hervey had great experience of God's love to him, and therefore his heart was full of love to God; and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake. There was such a sweetness of heart-love upon his tongue, that he used to speak of the love of the adorable Redeemer like one who had seen him face to face in the fulness of his glory. He would, with all the power of language and dignity of sentiment, speak for a long time together in praise of the ever blessed Saviour; but you might plainly see, though every body else was pleased, yet he was not satisfied with what he had said. He thought he had not said enough, and what he had said fell far below his Lord's merit. But still he would try again, and indeed was never weary. You could not hear him speak for any time upon this his favourite subject, without being convinced that he felt what he said; and if you had any love of God when you went into his company, his conversation would inflame it. He had an excellency, which I never saw to so great a degree in any other person. He never let an opportunity slip of speaking of the love of Christ. He would take occasion from the most common incidents, and yet it would not appear forced: for he had a wonderful talent at spiritualizing and improving whatever happened about him. By which means he hindered the conversation from turning upon trifling matters, and at the same time kept it up with spirit and usefulness. Having set the Lord always before him, he saw the love of God in every thing, and therefore it is not to be wondered that all objects and events should give him occasion to speak of it. In his last sickness it continued still to be his favourite theme: for whenever my friend, who was much with him, came into the room, he would begin to talk of the love of Christ, and of the great things which Christ had done for him, until his breath failed him; and as soon as he had recovered himself a little, he would proceed upon the same sweet subject: so that he might have truly applied to himself the words of the prophet—"My mouth shall be telling of thy righteousness and of thy salvation all th day long: for I know no end thereof."

This heart-love to God appeared evidently in every part of his character. As a minister, his faith wrought by love to the souls of men in all the offices of his function. While his health permitted him, he watched like a faithful shepherd over his flock. He used to visit them from house to house, and to speak freely to them of the state of their souls; and when the weakness of his body obliged him to drop these religious visits, he would often grieve that he could not be

more useful, and would speak with great concern and uneasiness of his not being able to preach oftener, and to do more for Christ. In the pulpit he was fervent and earnest with his people, and would often exert himself beyond his strength: for he preached the great doctrines of salvation as one who had experienced the power of them. It was manifest to all who heard him, that he felt what he spake. And when we speak what we know, and testify what we have seen, then God blesses this experimental preaching. He puts a divine power and energy into it, and renders it effectual to awaken sinners, to comfort them that mourn for sin, and to edify and build up the faithful. Mr. Hervey had many happy proofs of the usefulness of his preaching for each of these purposes; and therefore he did not think it enough to preach one a week on the Lord's day, but he set up a weekly lecture at Weston Favel, which was very well attended, and was blessed to many of his neighbours, who will be his glory and crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.

He did not forget that he was a minister in his own house: for he called his family together twice a day to serve God. It was his custom in the evening, after the servants had read the psalms and the second lesson, to explain some part of what had been read. In this exercise he would sometimes dwell for half an hour; and when he met with a sweet passage upon the love of Christ, I have heard him speak for three quarters of an hour, and then he concluded with a prayer.

In the morning, when the family were met together, he used to ask the servants —"Well! where was our text last night?" And after they had repeated it, he made them give an account of what had been said upon it, and then he would repeat and enforce his last night's discourse, concluding with prayer.

In the afternoon when he was called down to tea, he used to bring his Hebrew Bible or Greek Testament with him, and would either speak upon one verse, or upon several verses, as occasion offered. This was generally an improving season The glory of God is very seldom promoted at the tea-table, but it was at Mr Hervey's Drinking tea with him was like being at an ordinance: for it was sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

As a member of society, his faith wrought abundantly by love to his neighbour: for he was full of good works. His charities to the poor were very large; and that he might be liberal to them, he was very frugal in his own expenses He chose rather to clothe the poor, than to give them money. He used to get some judicious person to buy linen, coarse cloth, stockings, shoes, &c. for them at the best hand, alleging that the poor could not buy so good a commodity at the little shops, and with driblets of money. "I am God's steward," says he, "for his poor, and I must husband the little pittance I have to bestow upon them, and make it go as far as possible." But where money would be particularly serviceable to a family long afflicted with sickness, or to a prudent housekeeper who had met with great losses in trade, he would give five, ten, or fifteen guineas at a time, taking care it should not be known from whence the money came.

He gave away a great number of good books, with suitable instructions for their use, and especially bibles. In the blank leaf he frequently wrote something striking, or else stuck in a printed paper, relating to the promises of God in and through Jesus Christ.

Mr. Hervey's income was but small, and it may be wondered how he managed it so well as to have such sums to spare for charitable uses. He could not have done it entirely out of his church-preferment, and he had no fortune of his own; but what money was left after the family expenses were paid, and all the profits arising from the sale of his books, which was a very considerable sum, he gave away in charity. He made of it a bank for the poor. "And this," says he, "I have devoted to God. I will on no account apply it to any worldly uses. I write not for profit or for fame, but to serve the cause of God; and as he has blessed my attempt, I think myself bound to relieve the distresses of my fellow-creatures with the profit that comes from this quarter." And he is still relieving them. He was not willing that his charities should die with him: for he ordered all the profit arising from the future sale of his books to be con-

stantly applied to charitable uses. Thus having believed in God, he was careful to maintain good works, knowing that these things are good and profitable unto men.

In his private life he was under the influence of the same faith, working by love to the will and commandments of God. His holy walking was very exemplary. What he said in words, concerning his interest in the Redeemer's righteousness, he proved by his actions: for he was very sensible of the importance of this scripture, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John ii. 6.) Mr. Hervey walked very close after Christ, and found that the belief of Christ's righteousness being imputed to him for his justification, was so far from being a licentious doctrine, that it inspired him with the noblest motives to a grateful obedience. His holy life was an excellent recommendation of his principles; for I never saw one who came up so near to the scripture character of a Christian. God had enriched him with great gifts, and with great graces, and had made him humble; for he was humbled by the power of grace. He had been a very vain proud young man, but the grace of God emptied him of pride and self, and clothed him with humility. Having put on Christ, he had put on with him the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; which appeared in his great patience and resignation to the will of God. He had some very sharp trials of his faith and patience, both from God and from men, and he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. It was very remarkable, that, in his long illness, he was never known to fret or be uneasy, nor did the persons about him ever hear one angry or one hasty word come out of his mouth.

The same principle of faith working by love was manifest in his studies, which he directed to the glory of God. He was once a great reader of the Greek and Roman authors, and his writings show that he had a good taste for classical learning; but for some years past he chiefly applied himself to the sacred scriptures. God had blessed him with a fine understanding, and a great memory, which he exercised in reading the Bible in the original languages. He was very well skilled in the Hebrew, and was an excellent critic in the Greek, and was a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, who, like unto a man that is an householder, bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. He had a great veneration for this treasure of the Old and New Testaments. He used to talk of them in the highest terms, next to that adorable person of whom they treat. They were sweeter to him than honey and the honeycomb, and so they will be to every one who reads them, as he did, with faith. Whoever can act faith upon the exceeding great and precious promises contained in the sacred volume, will find so much sweetness in it, that he will have but little relish left for other books.

As to his writings, I leave them to speak for themselves.* They stand in no need of my praises. They are in the hands of the public, and every reader will form his own judgment. Oh that the Spirit of the living God may direct it, that whoever reads his writings may learn to have no confidence in the flesh, but to make mention of Jehovah's righteousness, even of his only.

The time would fail me, if I was to enlarge upon all the particulars of his life and death. That was not my design. I only intended briefly to relate some things, from whence a tolerable judgment might be formed of Mr. Hervey's character. But I cannot finish without taking notice of the last scene of his life, which was very triumphant and glorious. The last and great trial of his faith was more precious than that of gold which perisheth. Its preciousness never appeared more than in the hour of death: for then he evidently saw by faith, and appre-

* Mr. Hervey's printed works are,
Meditations, in 2 vols., which have met with a favourable reception, having already passed through fourteen editions.
Theron and Aspasio, in 3 vols., which have had a great run.
Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters.
A Visitation Sermon.
Three Fast Sermons, and
Some little Tracts, which I hope will be collected when his Letters are published.
There is also a manuscript ready for the press, in Defence of Theron and Aspasio

hended the salvation of God, and could rejoice in a clear view of his own interest in it. When Dr. Stonhouse saw him for the last time, namely, on Christmas-day, about two hours before he expired, Mr. Hervey pressed home upon him his everlasting concerns in the most affectionate manner, telling him that there is no abiding place, and begging of him to attend, amidst the multiplicity of his business, to the one thing needful.

The doctor, seeing the great difficulty and pain with which he spoke, (for he was almost suffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings,) and finding by his pulse that the pangs of death were then coming on, desired that he would spare himself. "No," says he, "doctor, no. You tell me I have but few moments to live, oh let me spend them in adoring our great Redeemer. Though my flesh and my heart fail me, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." He then expatiated, in the most striking manner, upon these words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, "All things are yours, life and death: for ye are Christ's." "Here," says he, "is the treasure of a Christian. Death is reckoned amongst this inventory, and a noble treasure it is. How thankful am I for death; as it is the passage through which I pass to the Lord and Giver of eternal life; and as it frees me from all this misery you now see me endure, and which I am willing to endure, as long as God thinks fit: for I know he will, by and by, in his own good time, dismiss me from the body. These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory. Oh, welcome, welcome death: thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of a Christian. To live is Christ, but to die is gain."

After which, as the doctor was taking his final leave of him, Mr. Hervey expressed great gratitude for his visits, though it had been long out of the power of medicine to cure him. He then paused a little, and with great serenity and sweetness in his countenance, though the pangs of death were then on him, repeated these triumphant words:—

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy most holy and comfortable word: for mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation. Here, doctor, is my cordial. What are all cordials to the dying compared to the salvation of Christ? This, this supports me." He found this supporting him in his last moments, and declared it by saying, twice or thrice, "precious salvation," and then leaning his head against the side of the easy chair, in which he sat, he shut his eyes, and fell asleep. Oh precious salvation! How precious must it be to the dying man, who, interested in it, can thank God for death, and reckon it among his riches; who, supported by faith in the salvation of God, can account it his gain to die; and can gladly say, "Oh, welcome, welcome death!" May this faith support you, my brethren, when all other supports fail, and make salvation as precious to you as it was to Mr. Hervey! And of this you may be assured, that what the Lord did for him, he is able also to do for you. He was indeed a glorious instance of the power of grace: for by the grace of God he was what he was. And grace is free. As free for you as it was for him. Able also to make you live and die as much to the glory of God as he did. He was truly a burning and a shining light; but the Lord's hand is not shortened. It can make your light shine also before men, and enable you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, as much as Mr. Hervey did. And the great use to be made of his example, is to stir you up to glorify God for the gifts and graces bestowed upon him, and to desire the same may be bestowed upon you. With this view I shall apply it,

First, To those persons who have never seen the salvation of God, and, consequently, are not prepared to depart in peace: and these are all careless sinners, who live secure in the wilful commission of sin. Mr. Hervey knew, that whenever the Lord should call him out of this life, he should be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; and clothed in this righteousness, he was certain that he should appear at the bar of justice without spot of sin unto eternal salvation. But this is not your experience. Nay, you have never been awakened to desire it. You have never been humbled under a sense of your lost condition, nor broken down under a conviction of your

helplessness: so that you have never seen your want of a Saviour, and, consequently, have never seen the salvation of our God. If you entertain any hopes of departing in peace, while you are in this state, you are, of all men, the most deceived: for when death comes, it will find you in your sins, unpardoned, without any faith in the Redeemer's righteousness to make death desirable, but with every thing that can make it terrible. The holy, just, and good law of the most high God will accuse, conscience will plead guilty, justice will condemn and punish, and the wrath of God will abide upon you for ever and ever. How is it possible you should depart in peace, unless you die insensible? and that would be dreadful indeed. If sin should so far infatuate you, that you never awake out of its delusive slumbers until you are called to receive the wages of sin, oh think what sort of a peace you speak to yourselves! since it leaves you in the greatest danger, and at the same time insensible of it. To depart in such a false peace would be your everlasting destruction. Oh, sirs, consider then what a delusion you are under! The wrath of an offended God abideth on you, the curses of his broken law hang over your guilty heads, and you are liable to the vengeance of his almighty justice, and yet you think yourselves safe. You are saying, peace, peace, while all the powers in heaven and earth are at war with you, and in a moment you may be cut off, and delivered over to the tormentors; and then you will have a sad and eternal experience of that awful threatening, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Men and brethren, what do you say to these things? Are they true, or are they not? If they be true, why are you not influenced by them? And if you think them not true, why do you make any profession of the Christian religion? Why do you come to the house of God to attend upon his ordinances? Your appearance here ranks you among professors; and, if you keep up the form without the power of godliness, I have for you, in the second place, a word of reproof.

There have arisen in the latter days, mockers, who pretend to ridicule the seeing of the salvation of God, and the being thereby prepared to depart in peace. Possibly there may be some such amongst us to-day, who laugh at all vital and experimental religion. If there be, I would ask them, whether the scripture has not promised deliverance from the fear of death? Is it not written, (Heb. ii. 15,) "that Christ came to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Observe, they were in bondage to the fear of death; but Christ came to deliver them. And did not he attain the end for which he came? Most certainly he did. "I have finished," says he to his Father, "the work which thou gavest me to do." Now it was part of the work to deliver his people from the fear of death; and as the work was finished, consequently they were delivered. And they say they are. They attest it; and they have given the most convincing proofs of their having conquered all fear of death: they have been afflicted, tormented, stoned, sawn asunder, put on the rack, and yet they would not accept deliverance, because they were sure of obtaining a better resurrection. And of these there have not been two or three only, but a noble and numerous army; yea, a great multitude whom no man could number; and, glory be to God, it is an increasing multitude. There are some who daily depart in peace; and there are hundreds, thousands now alive, who are waiting for their departure, with hopes full of immortality; and why should you think they will be disappointed of their hope? Will Christ break his word? Can his promise fail? No. His word and his promise shall be established, when heaven and earth shall be no more; and until the place of them shall not be found, the Lord will always have such witnesses of the truth of the doctrine in my text, as Mr. Hervey, who will depart this life in the triumph of faith.

Against these plain facts what can you object? They are founded upon the clear promises of scripture, which are literally fulfilled at this very day; and you can have no pretence to reject their authority, unless you run into downright scepticism, and deny the authority of the holy scriptures. If any of you have arrived at this pitch of ridicule, I shall not reason with you at present. Let the day decide the point. If death does not, judgment will. You will be forced to

be tried by that book which you reject, and by that Judge whom you have insulted and vilified. Oh that you may be convinced of your error before it be too late. May God open your eyes to see your guilt and your danger, that you may sue for his mercy along with them, who are seeking the experience of the doctrine in my text; to whom I have, in the third place, a word of comfort.

I suppose there are many persons here, who find the sting of death in their guilty consciences, and who therefore desire to be delivered from the fear and from the power of death. My brethren, there is a glorious Deliverer, who has in his own person conquered death and him that had the power of death, and he is able to make you conquerors. His power is almighty: for he is the Lord God omnipotent. And he is an all-loving Saviour, who is more ready to give, than you are to ask, his promised help. Since he has shown you your want of it, ask, and you shall receive, seek, and you shall find.

You do seek, you say, but it is with many doubts and fears. Of what do you doubt? Of Christ's power, or of Christ's love? He can deliver you. All things are possible to him, because all power in heaven and earth is in his hands. And he is a God of love; he has showed mercy to the greatest of sinners, and has shed his love abroad in their hearts. He has given them faith to see their interest in him, and then they were happy, living or dying; for whether they lived, they lived unto the Lord, or whether they died, they died unto the Lord: so that living or dying they were the Lord's.

True, say you, I believe this was the happy case of Mr. Hervey, and of many others; but I am full of doubts and fears, because I am such an unworthy creature that I do not deserve any mercy. Nor did they. God did not treat them upon the footing of desert; what he gave them was mere bounty, flowing from the riches of his unmerited love. That is the way in which he bestows his great salvation. All the blessings of it are free, as free for one sinner as for another. None are excluded, because they are great sinners: Paul found mercy. And none are rejected, because of their unworthiness: Mary Magdalene was pardoned; and why may not you? For all the gifts of God flow from his free grace, and are bestowed upon unworthy sinners; and if you are one of them, you are a proper object to receive the blessings of free grace; and the sense of your unworthiness should make you more earnest in asking, but it is no bar to your receiving all the blessings of salvation: for Jesus Christ assures us in his word "that he came to seek and to save that which was lost," such lost sinners as you are.

Thus you see what encouragement you have to believe in God. You have his word and his promise to rely upon: you have the testimony of God's people, declaring that they were once as you are, afraid of death, but now Christ has taken away the fear of it. They have seen the salvation of God, and know by faith that all the blessings of it are freely given them in Christ Jesus: therefore they are ready, they desire to depart. May the tender mercies of our God bring every one of you into this happy state; and to those who are already in it, I make my fourth remark.

My Christian friends and brrthren, you have seen the salvation of God, and are delivered from the fear of death; what return will you make unto the Lord for all the benefits which he hath done unto you? Certainly you will not forget the great things which he has already given you, and the greater things for which you are waiting; and let these considerations constrain you to love this divine benefactor, and to serve him without fear in an holy obedience all the days of your life. Give evidence of the sincerity of your love as your Lord requires, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Keep near to me in my ways, and walk close with me in mine ordinances, and you will not only thereby give proof of your love, but it will also grow exceedingly; and as it grows, your desire to depart will grow with it; for when the love of Christ rules in the heart, you will be ready, yea, you will desire to depart and to be with him. This was the happy experience of our deceased brother; and let his example stir you up to great care and watchfulness in your holy walking heavenwards, that your faith may be always working by love as his did. Consider the graces of his life, and seek the same. Stop not short, but try to get beyond him. Consider his death. Remember with what perfect assurance he spake of his interest in Christ, and what

strong proofs he gave of it, and then pray that your faith may stand as unshaken as his was in that great time of trial. And above all, forget not what supported him in his last moments; it was the clear view he had of his interest in the great salvation of God: "This, this," says he, "supports me"—now at the approach of death. Oh how precious did salvation then appear to him, when he found death coming disarmed, and without a sting; and it grew still more precious, when, with his last breath he declared, that death had no power to hurt the peace of God which ruled in his heart; for even then he found salvation precious. You need not fear, my brethren, but this will be your happy experience. God has given you the knowledge of salvation by the remission of your sins; and as your faith grows exceedingly, salvation will grow exceedingly precious. The greater experience you hereby get of the love of Christ, the more will you be supported under the trials of life, and the better prepared for the trials of death. You will find that the sweet sense of Christ's love in the heart will enable you to rejoice in suffering, and then you need not fear but it will enable you to rejoice in the sufferings of death; for who or what shall separate believers from the love of Christ? Shall the troubles of life or the pains of death? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No. In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. More than conquerors! Oh glorious warfare, in which believers not only conquer their enemies, but also reap innumerable and endless blessings to themselves. Even death is to them a real blessing; they expect it, they find it so, and they are more than conquerors over it through him that loved them.

In the last place I must put you all in remembrance, that neither the words of my text, nor what has been said upon them, will be of any benefit without a blessing from God. We cannot see his salvation with the eye of faith, nor experience the power of it, without the help of his grace. It is from him who has done all for us, that all must be done in us; and if some good impressions have been made this day upon any of your hearts, they will soon wear away, unless he preserve and strengthen them. If you desire at present to live Mr. Hervey's life, and to die his death, this desire will be ineffectual unless it be carried into act by the mighty working of God's Spirit. He is all in all: for which reason we always begin and always end the hearing of the word with prayer, being assured that if Paul should plant, and Apollos should water, yet it would be to no purpose, unless God should give the increase. Oh that it may be abundant this day to his glory, and to the good of your souls. To that end let us pray—

Oh almighty and most merciful God, we humbly beseech thee to look down with mercy upon this congregation, and to bless the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears. Make them the means of opening the blind eyes, which have never seen their want of thy salvation. Lord, enlighten them, and help them to seek, until they find, pardon and peace in thee. Be gracious to those who are now waiting upon thee, believing that after they have seen thy salvation they shall be able to depart in peace. O Lord God, manifest it unto them, and add this day to the number of those who have seen and experienced it. We desire to glorify thee for every living Christian, who knows in whom he has believed, and is ready and prepared to depart in peace. We give all the praise to the riches of thy free grace. And we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and love, beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, as they followed Christ, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate, to whom with thee, and the Holy Spirit, three co-equal persons in one Jehovah, be honour and glory, and blessing, and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE BLESSEDNESS OF LIVING AND DYING IN THE LORD:

PROVED IN

A SERMON

PREACHED UPON THE DEATH OF THE REV. THOMAS JONES, CHAPLAIN OF ST. SAVIOUR'S, SOUTHWARK, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE JUNE 6, 1762.

This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death.—
Psalm xlviii. 14.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.—Psal. cxvi. 15.

It is appointed unto all men once to die. They all die, because all have sinned: for the wages of sin is death. When sin entered into the world, death came in by sin, and death hath reigned so far as sin hath spread itself. The word is gone out of the Lord's mouth against all flesh, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This is the immutable decree of heaven, and when it come to be executed upon the natural man in his fallen unregenerate state, death is to him the king of terrors, because it finds sin upon him unpardoned. The sting of death being sin, and the strength of sin being the law, if the law charge sin upon the conscience, and stir up in it a sense of guilt, then will it arm death with a most dreadful sting. The soul will be terrified with the thoughts of meeting an offended God, and of standing at his awful bar to be tried for the breach of his holy and just law: for already conscience has ratified the sentence which is to deliver the soul over to the tormentors to dwell with them in everlasting burnings. O death! how inexpressibly terrible is thine approach to such an unpardoned sinner! But to them who are in a regenerate state, and have lived by faith in the Lord Christ, and are now dying in him, death has no sting. As their life was precious, so is their death precious in the eyes of the Lord. With the tenderest love he appoints the time, the place, and all the circumstances of their dying. When he lays them on the bed of languishing, he gives them the consolations of the gospel, and lets them know how dear and precious they are to him. This produces a sweet resignation to his will, and calls forth the delightful exercise of patience to his sovereign appointment. And while the outward man decays, he continues his grace to the inward man. His strength is then indeed perfected in their weakness, when the divine life in the soul flourishes amidst the ruins of the animal frame: so that faith by his mighty operation is still working joy and peace in the dying breast; and ceases not till it has done its last kind office, and rendered the concluding act of life an act of faith, according to what is written of the saints of old, "These all died in faith."

This was the happy case of our dear departed brother. He had sweet experience of the truth of the text, and found that his soul was bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God. His last sickness was altogether sweetened with divine love. His faith, his resignation, his comforts failed him not. A gracious God showed how dear and precious he was to him by removing every thing far from him which could render death in the least dreadful. He was not even suffered to have one doubt concerning his interest in Christ, but lived happy throughout his illness, and died rejoicing. To the glory of that rich grace which was so exceeding abundant towards him, I have been led to speak upon the occasion; not to exalt man, but God. Not for the honour of the deceased, but for the profit of the living; that when you hear what God has promised to do, and what he is daily doing for his people in their dying hours, you may be stirred

up to desire, that you may also die the death of the righteous, and that your latter end may be like his. For which purpose I shall, through God's help, speak to these particulars mentioned in the text, and show,

First, Who the persons are that are here spoken of under the name of Saints;

Secondly, How precious they are in the eyes of the Lord, and

Thirdly, How precious they are to him, not only in life, but also in death. These points I will endeavour to illustrate from scripture, and from the Lord's dealings with our deceased brother. May that good God, who did so much for him, favour us also with his gracious presence, and accompany us with his blessing, while we are considering,

First, Who the persons are that are here spoken of under the name of Saints. This name conveys a strange idea to some persons. They think that a saint denotes some vastly high and uncommon degree of holiness, to which very few have attained since the apostles' time, and therefore they give the title to none but the red-lettered saints in the calendar, and some few of the primitive fathers. They would strongly suspect a man of being a rank fanatic, who was to apply it to those that are now living in the true faith and fear of God, or to those that are lately dead. Such power has custom over the best of words, as to give them a turn quite foreign to their true meaning. The scripture speaks of saints in the Old Testament, men of like passions with us; and the New Testament applies the word to all the believers in the churches of Rome, and Corinth, and Ephesus, and Philippi, &c.; so that it is a general name for all the Lord's people: not for some by way of eminence, but for the whole household and family of faith. The Old Testament has two Hebrew words which our translators render saints, although the meaning of them be a good deal different. The one is Kedish, holy, separate from impurity; the other is Chesed, the word in the text, which signifies mercy, and in the form it is here used, denotes those who have received mercy, and who are partakers of the covenant mercies of God in Christ Jesus. These are all given to them freely without money, and without price; for misery being the proper object of mercy, and God being the sovereign disposer of his own mercy, he bestows it on the miserable, as it pleaseth him, to the glory of his grace. None have any claim. None deserve it; but all men are through sin, in justice and equity, cut off from it. Whoever, therefore, among the children of wrath meet with mercy from God, they must receive it as a free gift coming from his mere love and unmerited bounty through Jesus Christ: and on that account they should be ever acknowledging it with praise and gratitude. The state of guilt and misery from which they were raised, the abundant, exceeding abundant mercy already received in a state of pardon and acceptance, and the eternal mercy to be experienced in a state of glory, these should stir them up to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

These are the saints here spoken of, such as have obtained mercy freely by the grace that is in Jesus Christ. If you ask in what way, or by what means, they were brought into this happy state; it was by the word and Spirit of God. He convinced them of sin by the word. He made use of the law as a ministration of condemnation to bring them in guilty, and as the ministration of death to show them what their guilt deserved. They saw these things, but did not find themselves quite helpless. Their pride and unbelief still laboured to do some work that might recommend them to God, but the Holy Spirit clearly convinced them that they could not be saved by any works of righteousness which they could do, but that God saveth sinners freely through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. This is the hardest lesson in the school of grace. They learned it by degrees, and very slowly; but the Holy Spirit made them masters of it, and they were glad to submit to be saved by grace freely. Upon which God showed them great mercy: for he enabled them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They had power to trust the word of promise, and to rest upon God's faithfulness to fulfil it to their souls. And in thus believing, they found peace with God through the righteousness of Christ, and joy springing from the sense of their safety and happiness in him, and love to God for his great love to them,

which peace, and joy, and love increased in their hearts, as they lived more by faith upon Christ, and walked more closely with Christ. In this way the Lord made them saints, or showed them mercy. It was by some such experience that they became partakers of the tender mercies of our God. And, having received them freely, should not this be continually upon their minds, "what hast thou that thou hast not received?" They would forget their very name and character, namely, those that had received mercy, if by thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think, they should rob the Lord Christ of the praise of the glory of his grace. The more he gives, the more are they in debt. The greater are their gifts, the higher are their graces, still all is from God, freely given, freely continued. And when they happily finish their course, and receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, it will be mercy still, mercy magnified as the blessings are which it bestows, a glorified body—and soul,—admitted to the vision and enjoyment of God in heaven—and to eternity. All this is mercy, free mercy, as one sweetly sings, Psalm cxxxvi. and seems never tired of repeating the delightful words, "This is mercy that endureth for ever."

In what I have been saying under this head, I had a particular view all along to the experience of our deceased brother. He was certainly one of the saints in the text—one who had found mercy. He was always ready to ascribe all that he was and had (except what were entirely his own, sin and misery,) to free mercy and sovereign grace. Before the Lord was pleased to call him, he was walking in the error of his ways, like others who know not God. Such is the condition of mankind since the fall, that there is none righteous, no, not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one; not one of them can do any good till grace come; and when it comes, it first discovers this their guilty, helpless state, and convinces them of it, in order that they may be willing to receive their deliverance freely from the mercy of God, and to give him all the glory of it in time and in eternity. No wonder then that the time was when our brother walked as other men also walk, in the vanity of his mind, having his understanding darkened, and being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in him, because of the blindness of his heart. Of this God made him deeply sensible, and he was never ashamed to own it. His first awakening was by the gradual working of the law upon his conscience. It was not by outward means, such as hearing the word preached, or by some afflicting providence, sickness, trouble, or the like, but by the inward conviction of sin, that the Spirit of God wrought upon his conscience. He had his strongest convictions where he could have no means. The views which he had hereby of his state and danger were very deep and very distressing. While he was under this soul-concern my acquaintance first began with him. And since that time, which is about eight years ago, our great intimacy and friendship has given me a constant opportunity of being a witness of God's gracious dealings with his soul. He went mourning for a long time, bowed down under the sense of guilt and the power of unbelief. In this school of humiliation he learned self-knowledge. Here he was taught the sad effect of a ruined, spoiled nature; of a soul depraved in all its faculties, and estranged from the mind and will of God, and governed by its own corrupt and stubborn will, commanding the body to give up its members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. Here he was taught what sin is, namely, the transgression of the law, which is exceeding sinful, because the law is holy, just, and good, a perfect copy of the divine perfections. Here he was taught the damnable nature of heart sin, which is the fountain from which all sin flows, and which in the heart of the natural man is ever flowing over. He learned these lessons with such a deep experience, that the impression lasted all his days. For when God showed him great mercy, and he was enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus, yet still he found nothing of himself wherein to glory. Humble and low in his own eyes, he was ready to give the honour to whom alone honour was due. Yea, after he was greatly strengthened and established, so as to live by faith on the Son of God, still he knew that all was mercy. Mercy, free mercy had from him all the praise. And this was so much the frame and abiding temper of his

mind, that it appeared on all occasions. His spiritual friends and acquaintance can bear me witness that he was clothed with humility, and that he walked humbly with his God. A demonstration this, that he had found mercy, because he had made it the end and aim of his life to show forth the praises of that free mercy which he had so freely received; and as he lived, so he died, acknowledging himself an object of mercy. One of his last sayings was, "I am of the church of the first-born, who shall stand on Mount Zion. One chosen from among my brethren—a sinner saved, a sinner saved." Here was great faith, and great humility.

Having thus exemplified the character of the persons mentioned in my text, from the experience of our deceased brother, I go on to consider,

Secondly, An inestimable blessing belonging to all the persons of this character; namely, they are precious in the eyes of the Lord. Not precious in themselves, but made precious by the grace of God in Christ Jesus: for the motives to all the acts of God are within himself. He does not look into the sinner expecting to see something precious in him to recommend him to mercy, but he sets his love upon him, and that love brings every thing precious with it. Love disposes God to show mercy, convinces the sinner he wants it, inclines him to take it freely, and when he receives it by precious faith, then he becomes vitally united to a precious Christ. Such the Lord counts among his jewels. He sees them accepted in the beloved, and members of his mystical body. As he loves the head, so he loves the members: for my Father himself loveth you, saith Christ, because ye have loved me; and what cannot, what will not, the Father's love bestow? Nay, what has he not engaged to bestow? For what tongue can relate the exceeding great and precious promises which he has made to them who are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ? Grace, faith, righteousness, adoption, strength to overcome temptations, to conquer spiritual enemies, to bear afflictions, whatever is needful for life and godliness; in short, all things are theirs, for they all work together under God for their good. These, and many more, are the promises which the mercy of God has made, and his faithfulness is daily fulfilling to his adopted children in Christ Jesus; from whence it appears how precious they are in his sight. The greatness of the gifts shows the love of the giver. He gives them, oh most adorable, and most delightful truth! he gives himself. God himself is their God, their covenant God, and with himself how shall he not also freely give them all things? He becomes a father unto them, a loving reconciled father, to watch over them with a parent's tender affection, and to see that they want no manner of thing that is good. "I the Lord do keep my vineyard, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. He that toucheth it, toucheth the apple of mine eye." His children's enemies are his. So safe and happy are they in his precious love, that none shall pluck them out of his hands. He will keep them by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. Never, never will he leave them or forsake them; but having loved them freely, he will love them unto the end.

But let us bring this matter to a point: What saith the scripture? "Yea, he loved the people. All thy saints are in thy hands, and they are humbled at thy feet to receive thy words." (Deut. xxxiii. 3.) His love makes his people saints, and then keeps them in his hands, in a humble frame of mind to hear the word of God, and to obey it. Such honour have all his saints! So precious and dear are they to him, that he has expressly promised to keep them from all evil, and to bless them with all good. "There shall no evil befall thee," (Psal. xci. 10.) no outward evil, but what I will make the means of promoting my glory and thy good, therefore, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. xliii. 1, 2.) Whence this tender care and watchful providence? God would have his people know and believe, that when he keeps them, nothing can hurt them. For they are so precious and honourable in his sight, that his almighty arm will either defend them from, or else keep them patient and happy under, outward troubles, according to these sweet words which follow in the

fourth verse, " Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee," and showed my love not in keeping thee from the water and the fire, but in bringing thee safe through both ; and I will do greater things than these. " O taste and see that the Lord is good ! they that seek him shall not want any good thing." (Psal. xxxiv. 10.) What promises are these ! No good belonging to life, no good belonging to godliness, shall be withheld ; but all good shall be freely given them out of the fulness of Christ Jesus. How precious then must these persons be in the Lord's sight, with whom he deals in this wonderful manner ? What mercy, how free, how rich ; what blessings, how great, how numerous, has he for them ! Even in this life, he has more mercy to show, more blessings to give, than we can either ask or think. And what then will he give in another life ? The mercies of glory, the blessings of heaven none can adequately know, till they experience them. May the grace of God make you and me meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Thus precious are the Lord's people. Dear and honourable are they in his sight. The testimonies of his word to this purpose are very numerous, and daily experience confirms them. Every child of God is a witness of his heavenly Father's abundant mercy. But few had more reason to magnify and exalt it than our dear deceased brother. He was indeed precious in the Lord's sight, as appeared from the inestimably rich graces bestowed upon him, and the great works wrought by him. God had given him faith, and he enabled him to live the life of faith. By faith the Christian is engrafted as a branch into the true vine. And as the branch receives sap and juices from the stock into which it is engrafted, to bring forth leaves, and fair blossoms, and ripe fruit, so does the Christian receive from the Lord Christ, by virtue of union with him, proper influence and nourishment to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Our brother was a fruitful branch. He did not seek to bear fruit to make himself alive, (the fruit does not make the tree alive) but to testify his love and gratitude to do good to men, and above all to fulfil what is written—" Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ;" (John xv. 8 ;) that ye keep faith so constantly in act and exercise upon me, as to be always receiving out of my fulness grace for grace : for life and the acts of life in every grace are in and from me, and the more you live by faith upon me, the more will my Father be glorified. This was what Mr. Jones happily experienced in his heart and in his life. Whosoever believeth aright with his heart, will be kept in a humble dependance upon God, and in calling upon him to fulfil the promises of grace and strength in every hour of need : so that the promises freely made in Christ, may be freely made good through Christ. While he is in this right frame the soul lives out of itself, it sees nothing of its own to trust to or to rest in, but puts forth the empty hand to be constantly filled out of Christ's fulness. A person who lives thus by faith will be humble in heart. Every act of this faith declares his emptiness and want of all spiritual good, while it leads to Christ for his promised supply. Need I mention how much this was our brother's case ? Certainly you know it. He was humble indeed. The witnesses are as many as knew him, and when there could be no view in deceiving any body, when he was waiting for his dissolution, he demonstrated how greatly the Lord had humbled him. He told me in his last sickness, when I discoursed with him about the state of his soul, that as a dying man he had nothing to trust to but the righteousness of Jesus Christ ; and that his faith in it had been so strengthened in his illness that he had not one doubt or fear. But how much he was emptied of self and enabled to live in a humble dependance upon the grace and strength of Christ, will best appear from his life, in which, through faith, many precious fruits were produced.

The principal work of a believer throughout his Christian walk is the mortifying of the old man of sin, and the quickening and strengthening of the new man. So long as we are in this mortal body, every day must this work be repeated. The flesh will be lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh ; and he that is spiritual not only believes in the merit of Christ's death to save him from the guilt, but is also enabled to apply the power and efficacy of his death to subdue and crucify the dominion of those lustings. Subdued they must be. They must

not reign. The promise is, sin, inward as well as outward, shall not have dominion over you. The believer, relying upon this promise, proclaims war against all inward lusts and risings of sin, and sets upon them in the power and strength of the Lord; and so long as he looks up to Christ for fresh succours, he will be kept safe. As the old man is thus subdued, the new man is enabled more powerfully to put forth the proper acts of his spiritual life: for the deadening of the one is the quickening of the other. Of this spiritual conflict I have often read, especially in an excellent treatise of Dr. Owen's upon indwelling sin; but I learnt most of it by experience, by many sore and daily conflicts in my own soul, and by frequent conversation with our dear brother. He was much exercised this way, and the Lord did wonders for him in giving him grace to crucify the old man of sin. God's great love appeared in his great chastenings, for whom he loveth he chasteneth. He refines all his people in the furnace of afflictions. There our brother had been refining for some years, and much dross had been done away. Because he was precious in the sight of the Lord, he was tried, like gold, and purified seven times in the fire. For some years past he was afflicted with a disorder which kept him low, and often brought him to death's door. During these years his growth in grace was very evident to all his spiritual friends. We could see a manifest victory gained over the old man, whose power was weakened in his members which are upon the earth. He grew also dead to the world, and experienced what the apostle means, when he says, "The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Its pleasures, its riches, its honours were nothing to him. He did not despise them because he could not get them, but he parted with them freely, when he had them in his own power. God had provided for him a comfortable maintenance, but he laid up nothing, except for the poor, to whom he gave liberally of what he had, and with a willing mind. As to honour, he wanted not that which was from men. He was led to choose a better. He has it now. And this deadness to the world was of great use to him when he came to die. Then he had the comfort of it, as appeared from that sweet expression of his on his death-bed, "It is not dying out of the world, but dying in the world, and parting with all its toys and trifles, and that not with sickness or pain." And being thus by faith dead to the world while in it, what should make him afraid to die out of it? He had been so long kept under the cross, that it had been the means of crucifying the world unto him, of subduing his own will and his own tempers, of trying his faith, and of exercising his patience. In this school of affliction he was enabled to profit greatly. Therein he learnt resignation to the will of God, which made him under his long and great weakness of body kiss the rod and be thankful, and which delivered him from impatience, fretfulness, murmuring, and those selfish tempers that want to have our will, and not God's, to be done. There he learnt to live by faith upon Christ in all his offices, as a prophet to teach him wisdom to lead him to God, as a priest to bring him near to God by his atoning blood and righteousness, and as a king to keep him near to God, ruling in him and over him. This faith was tried, and it grew by trials. The more it was exercised the more did he find of the safety and happiness of living by faith upon the Son of God. And hereby he learnt what the patience of the saints is. Patience is an act of faith under outward afflictions, looking up to God for grace to hold out, as long as the afflictions last. Thus did our brother's patience. Under a long illness he was never heard to murmur; and upon his death-bed he was afraid of nothing but impatience, and God out of the tenderest love kept him, until patience had done its perfect work. And

As the cross was thus made profitable to the mortification of the old man, so was it to the quickening and strengthening of the new man. He had many precious graces; but do not mistake me. Whatever Mr. Jones had, except sin, he had it from Christ; whose love to him I would magnify from the greatness of the blessings bestowed. You could not converse with him without being put in mind of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. In his behaviour, in his conversation, he showed, that he had put on, as one of the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, long suffering, ready to bear with others, and ready to forgive, as Christ had also freely forgiven him

These amiable tempers of the new man appeared in all his conduct; and particularly when he stood up to minister in holy things, one might discover throughout, great kindness and tender love to precious souls. His own flock, to whom the Lord had made him an overseer, was much upon his heart. How earnest have I often heard him in prayer for them? And to the last he did not forget them. In his sickness he would be often crying out, "Lord, feed thy sheep, Lord, feed thy sheep." He was always studying and contriving something, that might be useful to their best interest. There is an alms-house in the parish called the College, and some small stipend for doing duty in it. Mr. Jones thought it was not right to take the money, unless he did the duty. Accordingly he began to read prayers, and to expound the scriptures in the college chapel, and went on for some time. The congregation used to be very large, and the success was very great. Many souls were in this place first awakened who are now walking in the faith and fear of God, adorning the gospel of our Saviour. But here he was stopped, and refused the use of the chapel. After this he set up a weekly lecture in his church, but he had not preached it long, before he was denied the use of the pulpit. However, he was not discouraged, he went on giving away good books, some of which he carried in person to every house in the parish; catechising the children, who came weekly to his house for that purpose; and paying religious visits among his parishioners, when they used to talk freely of the state of their souls. By these methods he tried to win his people to Christ, beside the stated duties of his office; in performing of which he seemed to set God always before him, and to be greatly drawn out in love to his hearers, of whom a very great number, I trust, did frequent his ministry, not led thither by the ease of his delivery, the sweetness of his voice, or the smoothness of his periods, but because they felt the weight and importance of the doctrines preached. Several I am myself acquainted with, who will, I hope, be his joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus, who hearing him preach upon the entire ruin of man by the fall, were convinced that they were in this state, and upon the entire recovery of man through Jesus Christ were enabled by his word and Spirit to believe in him for righteousness, and to live upon him for grace to walk, as he also walked. I mention not these things to set him above any of the Lord's ministers. He had no such thoughts when living. No one could think more meanly of himself than he did. And God forbid that I should intend to lessen others by exalting him. No. Grace, free grace, is all I want to exalt. As he was adorned with so many graces in his private life, and with so many public gifts, who should have the praise, but the giver of them all, even that good God who showed him mercy, and in whose sight he was so precious, as to have his marvellous loving-kindness continued even unto death; which leads me to that part of my subject, where we must still continue our adoration and thanks under the

Third and last head, which was to show how precious the saints are in the sight of the Lord, not only in life, but also in death. Whom the Lord loveth, he loveth unto the end. His love is like himself, without variableness or shadow of turning, and then often manifested in the clearest manner, when it is most wanted. The Lord looks with an especial love on his poor afflicted and distressed people. Indeed their troubles are tokens of his love; they come from his love to them, and are the means of drawing forth their love to him. One who had been long trained up in this way declared upon his own experience, that it was good for him he had been in trouble. As troubles increase, so do the proofs of his love, in strengthening faith to trust still, and to enable patience to hold out. And when the last great trial comes, love orders it all. The death of the saints, however superficially some may judge of it, is appointed by the infinite tenderness of God, as to all its circumstances. They may fancy he loves those most whom he takes out of the world without much pain or long sickness, but this is judging after the flesh. God can get himself most glory by them who suffer most, and can make them the happiest who suffer the longest. He can preserve their faith in the hottest trials. He can keep them for years in the fire, and the smell of it not pass upon them. He can arm them with grace to endure not with patience only, but also with joy; so that they shall taste much of the love of God, and count it all joy when he tries them with his fiery trials. And when he is finishing their

course, he shows then how exceedingly precious they are to him. Then he brings the graces of the new man into strong act and exercise, as the body droops. He keeps faith lively and vigorous, hope rejoices, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and love shed abroad in the heart gives sweet earnests and foretastes of the speedy enjoyment of that glory. These graces make the approach of death welcome, as our deceased brother found it in his last moments, when he said—"An eternal life of glory for a life of misery—who would not change misery for happiness? Hasten, hasten, dear Lord." That the Lord's people are thus precious to him in death, is evident from the promises in his word, and from the daily accomplishment of them; these promises are left upon record for the support of faith in a dying hour, and they are rich cordials for fainting spirits. This is for the sick bed, (Psal. xli. 3,) "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness," strengthen him inwardly as the outward man decays, and he shall lay easy upon his bed, refreshed with the Lord's inward comforts, while the body is languishing. And when the body grows very weak, and death is approaching, here is a cordial—"This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death," (Psal. xlviii. 14.) This is our covenant God, whose mercies fail not; he will guide us safe by his love and power, even until the body draws its last breath, and expires. Who would not wish to have such a blessed guide unto the verge of life? Lord, guide us all thither; and when the life of nature is ending, then fulfil thy faithful promise, (Prov. xiv. 32,) "The righteous hath hope in his death," not only in his sickness, but also in the very moment of death he hath hope, and the next moment he enjoys the thing hoped for. These are sure words of promise, which cannot be broken, and God be thanked for the accomplishment of them. He has been fulfilling them in every age, and speaking peace through Jesus Christ to his saints in their death. It is written of them in the Old Testament, who through faith and patience inherited the promises, "These all died in faith," (Heb. xi 13,) they had faith while they were dying, and believed that the time was now come, when God would fulfil his exceeding great and precious promises to them in a life of eternal glory; and therefore it is said, "they fell asleep," they fell into the arms of death as composedly as a weary traveller falls asleep, expecting to awake in the morning of the resurrection with glorified bodies, like the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as these all died in faith, so do believers to this very day. The Lord is faithful to his word, and his promises are still made good. His people are at present as safe in his hands, as happy in his love, as they were in any former age. Still they say with their last breath, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The present times afford many instances of this triumphant faith, and there is a very striking one before us. Whose death was ever more precious than our brother's, in the sight of the Lord? How could God show his love to him upon his dying bed more than he did? Although his fever was violent for seven days, yet his soul was still and calm. He was not troubled with any fear of death; that was kindly taken away. He had no doubt concerning his eternal state. He was made patient to God's will, bore pain without murmuring, and waited the Lord's time for his release. Were not these undoubted proofs of God's special love to him? He suffered his faith to be tried in the fire, that it might come out, like gold, purer and brighter; and it stood the fire, rejoiced in it, and was refined by it. In one of his weakest hours he said, "Blessed be the Lord for that degree of faith which he hath given me: though it has operated in so weak a manner, yet I have many blessed and comfortable marks in my own soul of his love to me." Here was faith, and much humility. He could find nothing in himself to put the least trust in as to his acceptance with God, and therefore his trust was stronger in Christ. This showed itself in what he said on his death-bed, "What an unfelt, what an unthought-of corruption, is here both in body and soul:" he felt more of it, and in a greater degree than he had ever thought of before; and yet this deep sense of his corruption did not drive him from Christ, but made his faith cleave the closer to him: "My flesh and my heart faileth," saith he, "but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." His ground for this he delared was, "a covenant of mercy, free grace in the Lord Jesus,"

In which, knowing that he had his share, he could say, "Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation—Now, Lord, I can lay me down in peace, and safely take my rest." In this happy frame he was praying, "Lord, secure a soul thou hast died to save." Then, after a pause, he cried, "He will, he will. I have part here, I shall have all soon." Oh what precious, precious faith was this! What great love did the Lord manifest to him in thus strengthening his faith on the bed of languishing, and visiting him with the sight of his salvation. As he said on Friday, "I have had a glorious view of the love of Christ to my soul this morning." This love shed abroad in his heart brought many sweet words out of his dying mouth, such as, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." He knew that Christ would be his gain in death, as well as in life, and therefore he prayed, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and give me an easy dismission—Lord give me an easy dismission to a blessed eternity." And this triumph of faith held out to the last. He looked forward with joy, when he said, "Before this time to-morrow, it may be, I shall be where all sorrow shall be done away;" and at another time he said, "I shall have a sabbath of Trinity before I thought of it, to worship a triune God," which was granted him. He kept his Trinity Sunday in heaven, adoring the Three Persons in one Jehovah.

I am so particular in relating the dying words of our dear brother, because each of them is a confirmation of the text. The Lord says, the death of the saints is precious in his sight, and our brother's experience demonstrates the truth of the Lord's word. He was enabled to say great things for God, and in every sentence he spake, the love as well as the faithfulness of God was manifest. Was there not great faith, and great conjugal affection in what he said to Mrs. Jones? "Do not be surprised at any alteration you may see in me: for death always makes strange alterations. When the Lord is pleased to give me my dismission, rejoice over my corpse, and praise God for what we have suffered together here, and for what we shall enjoy together hereafter." May the Lord make up her loss, and give her to rejoice in the comforts of his salvation here, and to enjoy the blessings of it hereafter. Towards his latter end he was much in prayer. These were some of his expressions: "The silver cords of life are breaking, and man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets—Lord, guide me home in safety, and lead me through the shadow of death.—This mortal shall soon put on immortality.—Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.—I go hence like a shadow that declineth, I wither away like grass, but the Lord is the portion of my soul and my strong hope." His hope did not fail him. God was with him when he died, so that he had no evil to fear, when he went down into the valley and shadow of death. His body was left to rest in peace and his soul is with that innumerable company, who are standing round the throne, and praising God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

Is this, my brethren, the faith of God's elect? Cannot death untie the bond of union between Christ and them? But are they so precious to him in their dying hours, that his love either keeps their faith firmly trusting on him, or else happily rejoicing in him? Oh, sirs, if this he the case, and a most certain matter of fact it is, give God the glory of our brother's death, and praise him for the abundant mercy which he then experienced. And although he was so soon taken from us, being but in his thirty-third year, yet remember what great things God did in him and by him, and be thankful; and remember what great things God did for him in his dying hours, and again repeat your thanks to him whose mercy endureth for ever. May he vouchsafe this same mercy to you and me in the same circumstances.

Having given all the glory to whom it is alone due, let us see what improvement this scripture will afford us. Have you been able, my brethren, to follow me in what I have been speaking, and is it your experience? Has God shown you mercy? Have you any good evidence of his love to your souls, and are you living in the comfort of it? If this be your happy case, know ye not, that there is a great man fallen in Israel? One whom God made use of as a blessed instrument to bring sinners into the happy state which you are in. Perhaps he

was an instrument to some of you. And now the Lord has no more of this work for him, he takes him away. Is not this an awful providence? Should it not put you upon praying for the prosperity of our Sion, and teach you what manner of persons you ought to be? Should not your lips, your lives, your time, and all your talents, be showing forth the praises of your good God? Should not you be seeking to live by faith upon Christ, and to receive out of his fulness grace to mortify sin, to deaden you to the world and its riches, and honours, and pleasures; to conquer Satan, and to keep you alive to God, that you may have communion with him in life and death? For is not the time short? How short you know not. Perhaps in a day, perhaps in an hour, you may be in eternity. Keep this in your eyes, and remember, what an eternity will be in heaven. Take heed therefore that ye be found in your work when death comes. If it find you living in faith, then you may hope to die comfortably in faith. If the world be crucified to you, you will find it easy to part with it. If you have been long fighting against your spiritual enemies, and against all filthiness of flesh and spirit, will it not be matter of joy to have the battle ended, and yourselves more than conquerors for ever? Oh, sirs, is it not of eternal moment, that you live thus till the night of death come, that then your work being done, you may be ready to enter into the joy of your Lord?

If any of you say, I am a poor weak believer, and I am afraid I shall have nothing to speak for God when I come to die. Leave that to him. He does all things well. If he has any glory to get by your speaking, he will open your mouth. But all the Lord's people leave not such noble testimonies behind them as our brother did. He was a minister, and a young minister, cut off in the midst of life and usefulness. What if God had no more work for him to do among his own people, was he not precious in the Lord's eyes that he should take him to himself, when he had borne so little of the burden and heat of the day? What if God intended these dying sayings should preach for him to others, cannot God bless what means he pleases? Take heed that ye be also ready, and then leave God to do with you as seemeth him good in life and death.

Perhaps you may be a true believer, but you are apprehensive you shall not be comforted, nor rejoice upon your death-bed, as our brother did. Why do you distrust God? Is it not your business to live by faith to-day, and to take no thought for to-morrow? When to-morrow comes, then it is time enough to think about it. And the work of to-day is to be the work of to-morrow, and so on from day to day, the life you live in the flesh you must be living it by the faith of the Son of God. You cease to live thus, when times that may never come, and cases that may never be, interrupt the present actings of faith. Perhaps you may die suddenly, you may never lie upon a sick bed, or if you do, perhaps a quiet resignation to the will of God may be the grace you are then to exercise. For wise reasons God may not then fill you with great comforts. Is there not something very selfish in seeking these comforts? And is it not an unbelieving spirit to fear how you shall behave without them? What! cannot you trust your comforts with God, the God of all comfort? Will you not have time enough to be comforted when you get to heaven? If you are in the way thither, and would get quietly on, leave yourself in God's hand, and let him do what he will. Trust him, even if it be in the dark, this direct act of faith is what God loves. It brings most honour to his word, and glory to his faithfulness. It shows what an high opinion you have of his perfections, that you can believe him without sight. Our deceased brother had this faith, and made a noble confession of it to a precious servant of Christ's, who went to see him in his illness, and asked him, "how he did:" he answered, "I am so full of pain, and so ill, that I can think but little, but I know that Jesus is carrying on the interests of my poor soul notwithstanding." These are to me the choicest of his dying words. I see in them a well grounded trust and confidence in God, far more deep and solid than all the rejoicing of triumphant faith. For when he had not this to comfort him, he had what was much better. When he had no sight, he could walk by faith. If God teach you, my brethren, to walk thus, you will not be troubled about what you are to have, or not to have, when you come to die. If you can say this, Father, thy will be done, and can say it from your hearts, then let him appoint

your death, and the time and manner of it, and your frame and temper of mind upon its approach; and, depend upon it, he will order all things for the best.

Perhaps there may be some persons here very indifferent about the matter, whether God loves them, and whether they be precious in his sight or not. This comes from the love of present things. Their hearts are set upon the world. The objects about them have all their affections. Their eager pursuit after pleasures, honours, riches, and ease, sets death at a distance, and makes heaven not desirable. Tell such persons how uncertain life is; they do not care, they will run the risk. Tell them, if they die in their sins, what their eternal state will be; they would not choose to be in everlasting torments, but they will venture it, rather than not enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. What a delusion are these persons under! They believe that sin will bring eternal misery upon them, if not pardoned; and yet they live to-day in sin, as if they were sure they should not be in hell before to-morrow. And they have no sort of evidence that they shall be alive the next moment. Our time is in the hand of God, and he cuts it off when and how he pleases. Oh, sirs, if you have ears to hear, hearken. Where will the course of life you are in end? Stop a moment, and consider. Have you any sin in your hearts, any sin in your lives, which you cherish, and will not part with? What! will you say, I will keep it, it is a blessed morsel, it is a very heaven to me: I do not care if I go to hell for it? And dare you defy the vengeance of the Almighty, and with this thought return to the commission of it? Suppose in the very act God should require your soul, and death carry you that moment from sinning to judgment. This has been. This may be again. And why not your case? If it should—Oh what thought is that!—If it should, what would you have to do throughout eternal ages, but wail, and weep, and gnash your teeth for having been so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, as never to prepare to meet God in judgment. May the Lord awaken you to a serious consideration of these things, that you may flee from the wrath to come, and may be delivered by the tender mercies of our God from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son.

The sum of what hath been now delivered is this. God is gracious to those whom he calls to the knowledge of himself in showing them mercy; and in keeping them throughout their lives as his precious jewels, and throughout their dying hours, his love is with them, and never leaves them nor forsakes them. The testimonies of scripture and of the people of God are undoubted evidence of these truths, particularly the experience of our deceased brother. I have laid before you an account of God's dealings with his soul from the time God was pleased to reveal his Son in him. Glory be to that rich sovereign grace, which did so much for him and by him. Glory be to the conqueror of death who showed him such abundant mercy on his dying bed. And Jesus is still the same: his promises, his grace, his power, are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Whosoever believeth in him shall never be confounded, never, never confounded, but in life shall be kept by his power through faith unto salvation, in death safe, in eternity blessed. Trusting, then, and believing in him, while we live, may we live unto the Lord; and when we die, may we die unto the Lord: so that whether we live or die, we may be the Lord's. Oh that this may be the happy case of all who hear me to-day, and may the Lord incline our hearts to ask it of him in prayer, saying,

O thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hear us for his sake, and give a blessing to the word now spoken. Make it the means of turning sinners from the error of their ways. Convince them, by thy word and Spirit, of the danger of their being by nature children of wrath, and of their continuing in that state. Teach them, gracious God, the number of their days, that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom. And convince them of righteousness, that they may see a perfect righteousness in thy dear Son, and by faith trust in it, and live upon it, bringing forth abundantly the fruits of it in their hearts and lives. Be merciful, we beseech thee, O holy Father, to those among us, who are seeking thy face, and desiring to know thee as a reconciled God. Oh, give them that faith which worketh by love, and visit them with thy salvation. Let them see the felicity of thy chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of thy people, and give

thanks with thine inheritance. And make thine inheritance more thankful. May the partakers of thy precious love in all things be giving of thanks. May all that is within them bless thy holy name for thy free mercy, and may all that they have, and all that they are, be showing forth the praise of the glory of thy grace. Keep them, O Lord our God, in an humble dependance upon thee. Carry them safe through the trials and difficulties of life, and give them power to hold on and persevere unto the end, that they may die in faith, and having happily finished their course, may receive from thy free grace a never-fading crown of glory. Grant this, holy Father, for the sake of thy beloved Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom with thee and the eternal Spirit, three coequal persons in one Jehovah, be endless praise. *Amen*

A DISCOURSE UPON THE SELF-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.—Exod. iii. 14.

PREFACE.

SEVERAL persons have earnestly requested me to make the following discourse public. When they heard it preached at St. George's, Hanover-square, and at St. Dunstan's in the West, they said they found great benefit from it, and they have made me hope it may be as useful to others as it was to them. I have therefore offered it to the public, such as it is. The adorable person of whom it treats will overlook its imperfections: he knows that it is the produce of a grateful heart, willing to make some return, how poor and small soever, for the numerous, great, and inestimable blessings received from his hands. And if it shall please him to make this discourse the means of strengthening one believer, or of converting one unbeliever, may the glory be his. I desire no greater honour than to be an humble instrument in his hands of magnifying and exalting Jesus Christ, who is above all blessing and praise: for he is over all, God blessed for ever. *Amen.*

Before the first edition of this discourse was published, two anonymous authors were greatly offended at the bare title in the advertisement, and they were exceedingly bitter in their invectives against it. Writers of no name deserve no notice. I shall not think myself concerned to fight I know not who in the dark. But if any of the opposers of the self-existence of Jesus Christ, will write against the proper preface in the communion service for Trinity Sunday, and set his name to it, I hope there will be persons found to defend it.

"It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, almighty, everlasting God, who art one God, one Lord; not one only person, but three persons in one substance. For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any DIFFERENCE or INEQUALITY." This is my belief, and upon this authority I build the following discourse. If the church of England be mistaken, then I am; but if she be right in asserting that there is no difference or inequality between the persons, then I am right in asserting that Jesus Christ has, on good scripture grounds, the same self-existence with the Father without any difference or inequality.

Several editions of this discourse have been printed since the year 1755. At present they are all sold. And there being still a demand for them, I have consented to republish it, as my testimony for the essential glory of God the Saviour. When infidelity is not afraid openly to attack this fundamental truth, it becomes the worshippers of our Lord to bring forth their strong arguments.

And there have not been wanting able champions in our day, and successful, who, upon the footing of scripture, have completely answered all the infidel objections; so that the doctrine of the Trinity has been better established by the late opposition, and the truth has greatly prevailed. The candid believer has been hereby confirmed in the practical knowledge of the doctrine, and in the experience by the Holy Ghost, what it is to enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son. Upon these two grounds the truth stands perfectly established, *viz.*, scripture truth, and scripture experience: against which he that sitteth upon the throne has said, and he has made his word good, "the gates of hell shall not prevail."

While the scriptures are allowed to be of divine authority, and while they are found to be the power of God unto salvation, the church of England will be orthodox in her creeds and articles. So long will the doctrine of the Trinity be established upon infallible evidence, and will be confirmed by sure experience. They will be rooted and grounded in the truth, who know the Father's love as it is revealed in the Son, and shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

Reader, may it be thy happy case to believe the truth, and to feel the power of what is written; "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. *Amen.*" 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.—John viii. 24.

This is a very awakening scripture, and ought to rouse up your particular attention. The doctrine here maintained is the self-existence of Jesus Christ; which is not a mere speculative point, it is not an indifferent thing, whether you believe it or not; but your eternal salvation is so much concerned in it, that if you do not believe it, you will die in your sins, and will have every one of them to answer for at the tribunal of God. Is not this an interesting subject? Is not every one of us nearly concerned in what is to befal us after death? And has not our Lord here forewarned us of what is to befal them who deny his divinity? "They shall die in their sins." And this he repeats twice in the text, the more strongly to impress it upon their memories. And what is it then to die in their sins? Is it a light trifling matter not worth your care and consideration? to die in the midst of the pollution of a sinful life, to be taken away with all the guilt of it upon your heads, and to find after death no atonement, no Mediator, to protect you from the just indignation of the most holy God, who has declared that he is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity—is all this of no consequence to you? Does not the danger come near enough to alarm even the most stupid and insensible sinner? But yet this is not the worst of dying in their sins. It is the most striking circumstance to consider to what a depth of misery your pollution and guilt must sink you. Sin and misery are inseparably connected, and none can deliver you from sin, but he who came to take away the sins of the world; and he cannot deliver you as man, he must be God who can have merit sufficient to take away sin; therefore, if you deny him to be God, your sins remain, and misery must be your portion—misery, the greatest you can suffer in soul and body, among the condemned spirits in hell for ever and ever.

This is the meaning of dying in your sins; and can there be any truth more affecting, or any subject more interesting? Does not the very proposing it awaken your hopes and fears? Every one of you is concerned at the peril of his eternal happiness to come to a point in this case, and to be determined; and therefore, men and brethren, let me intreat you to examine the matter strictly and solemnly. The divinity of Jesus Christ is the very foundation of the Christian religion. It is the first and principal article. The whole rests upon it; even what is called the morality of the gospel receives its obligation from his being the true God. If he was in any respect inferior to the Father, Christianity would be altogether the most stupid and absurd system of religion, and the most gross piece of idolatry that was ever invented in the world; for the Christian church has always acknowledged Jesus Christ to be God co-equal and co-eternal

with the Father, and has offered prayers and praises unto him, and served him with every act of religious worship: and the church of England has given him divine honour in the same full and ample manner as he claimed it, John v. 23. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Certainly it is necessary on all these accounts to examine this fundamental point: and let us then consult the sacred books upon it, and hear their judgment, and abide by their determination. And they speak as full to the point as any unprejudiced person could desire, and they have set the doctrine in so clear a light, and it appears to me with such strong evidence, that I have no more doubt of Christ's self-existence, than I have of the plainest truth. And this perfect conviction (which I thank God I find in multitudes of other persons) makes me wish, out of love to your souls, that every one of you was as perfectly convinced, lest you should die in your sins; and if you can but desire conviction, you shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. And may the adorable Jesus, whose honour I am going to defend, now plead his own cause with you. May he send his Spirit into all your hearts, and convince you that he is God indeed, while I am speaking upon the two propositions contained in the text.

First, Jesus Christ is the self-existent God.

Secondly, If ye believe it not, ye shall die in your sins: "therefore I said unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins."

First, the self-existence of Jesus Christ is declared in these words, believe that I AM, that I have existence in myself, and exist by a necessity of nature: for I made all things, and without me was not any thing made that is made. I am the Creator, they are my creatures. And the Creator must exist in a different manner from the creatures. All things are dependent upon me, and have only a derived existence—they are what I made them, and they continue as long as I support them. No creature ever came into life without my power, and when I take away their breath, they die, and turn again to their dust; so that they have only a dependent being, whereas my existence is necessary and underived. I AM is my incommunicable name, and what it means is my incommunicable attribute.

Thus our blessed Saviour is the great and eternal I AM. He is Jehovah: for he exists in a different manner from all other beings and things, as the word Jehovah denotes. The Christian writers, as far as I know, are unanimous in their interpretation of this divine name; they all agree that it relates to the existence of the divine essence, and is descriptive of that independent property by which Jehovah has existence in himself, whereas all other beings and things derive their existence from him. And to this the very Jews assent, acknowledging that Jehovah signifies the essence which necessarily exists. This therefore is a settled point. Now our Saviour is frequently called Jehovah in the Old Testament, and thereby the self-existence of the divine nature is ascribed to him. Thus the prophet, Isa. xliii. 11, "I, even I, am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Saviour." There was no Jesus, no Saviour but Jehovah: therefore Jehovah and Jesus are one. And again we read, chap. xlix. 26, "All flesh shall know that I Jehovah am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob." And the prophet Jer. l. 34, says, "Their Redeemer is strong, Jehovah of hosts is his name;" the name Jehovah belongs to the Redeemer; it is his incommunicable title. And since it is agreed on all hands, that Jehovah signifies the self-existent essence, consequently Jesus Christ is self-existent, for he is Jehovah. This argument is, I think, very clear and full, and the force of it may be thus summed up: Jehovah is self-existent, but Jesus Christ is Jehovah, therefore he is self-existent.

In this sense our Lord says in the text, If ye believe not that I AM, that Jehovah is in me of a truth, ye shall die in your sins. I AM cannot relate to his created being: all the sophistry of Arianism and Socinianism cannot wrest the words to such a sense, because the Jews could not but believe that he existed, when they heard him say, I AM; or if it was possible to disbelieve it, yet it would not have been a capital crime, unless he had been something more than a created being: therefore the very reason of the thing proves that he claimed some manner of existence different from human, and which it is absolutely neces-

sary for every man to believe, unless he would die in his sins, and suffer the punishment due to them for ever. The translators have done great injury to this scripture by inserting the word he, I AM he, which is not in the original, and by putting it in, they have destroyed both the sense of the passage, and also the force of the argument: for, I am he, ought to refer to something said; but it has no reference, no sort of connexion, either with what goes before or follows after. And therefore it is as absurd to insert the word here, as it would be in Exodus, where, upon Moses' inquiring for some descriptive name, by which the Israelites might know that the God of their fathers had sent him to deliver them, "God said unto him, I AM THAT I AM, and thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Would it not be abominable nonsense to read the words, I am he that I am he, and I am he hath sent me unto you? The learned world, Christians and Jews, would not allow of this glaring absurdity; for they have allowed that this passage in Exodus is expressive of the self-existence of the Deity. I AM denotes the necessary manner in which he exists, and since this is the meaning of it in one part of scripture, certainly it must mean the same thing in every part of scripture, especially when it is used by that person who claimed to himself all the attributes of divinity: and therefore the meaning of the expression if there was any obscurity in the usage of it in the New Testament may be clearly ascertained from its usage in the Old. When God sent Moses to the Israelites, with this divine name I AM, and when Christ, who never scrupled to call himself God, assumed the same name I AM, certainly the same words spoken on the same subject must convey the same idea of self-existence, and whoever is self-existent is the true God, but Christ is self-existent, therefore he is the true God.

When the Arians and Socinians are pressed hard with scripture arguments, they will allow Christ to be God in some limited and restrained sense of the word; but they cannot bear to hear of his self-existence, because this makes him equal with the Father, which they deny: for it seems an insuperable difficulty to them, that he whom the scripture calls a Son, should have the same self-existence with the Father. This is a standing objection with them, and with every other species of infidels, but this objection upon the true state of the case vanishes at once: for it is founded upon a very gross mistake, both of the nature of the doctrine, and also of the scripture explanation of it.

The nature of the doctrine is this. In the unity of the divine essence there are Three persons equal in all perfections and attributes, so that none is before or after other, none is greater or less than another, but the glory is equal, the majesty co-eternal. The trinity in unity is thus expressed in scripture, 1 John v. 7. "There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One." "One," says the unbeliever, "how can that be? How can Three be one? That's a contradiction." If it be, it is a contradiction of his own making: for unless they be Three in the same respect as they are One, which opinion could never be maintained by any man in his senses, then he must take the contradiction upon himself; and there may be, for any thing he knows to the contrary, Three persons in one essence, unless he can prove that the unity of the essence absolutely excludes personality. But before we can allow him this, he must first give us a plain account of the manner of the existence of the divine essence, and must demonstrate that it cannot admit of any persons in it; which he cannot possibly demonstrate by the light of nature. The most acute and enlightened genius is not equal to the subject. It is as far above his capacity, as the heavens are above the earth. Let him soar aloft upon the strongest pinions of moral reasoning, and try to measure infinity with the longest chain of metaphysical argument; yet when he came down from his towering flight, he could give us no fresh intelligence concerning the divine existence. The mode and manner of it would be still unknown. We know that there is an immortal spirit united to the body; but does any philosopher pretend to determine the mode of the existence of this created spirit? What idea can he form of it? Whence does he borrow this idea? Or in what kind of language will he communicate it unto another? If he be not clear in this more easy point, how can he form an idea of the mode of the existence of Jehovah?

Can he determine how an infinite spiritual essence exists? What idea has he of the manner of the existence of an essence which was from eternity, and which was the first cause of all other beings? When unbelievers will write upon this subject, and settle the mode of existence of an uncreated essence, then they may speak with some certainty upon it. But while they are forced to confess that they know not the mode of the divine existence, and yet maintain that Jehovah cannot exist but in one Person, is it not evident that their conduct is inconsistent? For the personality is founded on the manner in which the essence exists; this they do not pretend to determine, and yet they deny the personality of the essence, and venture their eternity upon it. Is not this conduct absurd and irrational? And will you then ever listen to what unbelievers may assert concerning the manner of the divine existence? for they are indeed absolutely ignorant of it, and you may be assured of their ignorance, if you only ask them to account for the manner of the existence of a created spirit. And when they give up this point, which they must, then urge this question to them, How can you pretend to account for the manner of the existence of an infinite uncreated Spirit, after you have owned that you cannot account for the manner of the existence of a finite created spirit? Even to pretend to it is a most glaring absurdity; and therefore we may conclude, upon the footing of sound reasoning, that there may be three Persons in the unity of the divine essence; and the scripture positively maintains there are Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these Three are One. And

If nothing remain for the infidel to object to the state of the doctrine, what can he offer against the scripture explanation of it? There can be no difficulty but what arises from the names of the divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and these have been a great handle of objection, and are still with unbelievers who are so blinded with their vices, that they know nothing of the true sense and meaning of scripture, but only look into it for matter of cavil: they suppose, with ignorance common to infidelity, that these names were to give us ideas of the manner in which the Persons exist in the essence, but the scripture had a quite different view in using them. The ever-blessed Trinity took the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not to describe in what manner they exist as divine Persons, but in what manner the divine Persons have acted for us men and for our salvation. These names were to give us ideas of the distinct offices, which the Trinity had agreed to sustain in the economy of our redemption. The scripture informs us, St. Paul frequently, Eph. i. 4; ch. iii. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9; Tit. i. 2, &c. and 1 Pet. i. 20, that the covenant of grace was made before the world, and the gracious plan of man's salvation was settled before he had his being. According to the plan of this covenant, one of the divine Persons agreed to demand infinite satisfaction for sin, when mankind should offend, and to be the Father of the human nature of Jesus Christ, and our Father through him; and therefore he is called God the Father, not to describe his nature, but his office. Another of the divine Persons covenanted to become a Son, to take our nature upon him, and in it to pay the infinite satisfaction for sin, and therefore he is called Son, Son of God, and such like names, not to describe his divine nature, but his divine office. Another of the divine Persons covenanted to make the infinite satisfaction of the Son of God effectual, by inspiring the spirits of men, and disposing them to receive it, and therefore he is called the Holy Inspirer, or Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God, not to describe his divine nature, but his divine office. The terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are terms of economy, and are accordingly used in scripture, to describe the distinct parts which the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity sustained in our redemption.

I wish it was in my power to explain the scripture doctrine in such words, as you may all easily understand. The doctrine of the Trinity is the most necessary article of the Christian religion, and we cannot take one safe step in the way to heaven without being clear in it. And since it is the very foundation of your faith, I therefore intreat your more particular attention, while I am considering it. The scripture makes no difference between the divine Persons, except what is made by the distinct offices, which they sustain in the covenant of grace. The Persons are each equal in every perfection and attribute; none is before or

after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. And consequently Christ, who was from eternity co-equal with the Father, did not make himself inferior because he covenanted to become a Son, nor did the Holy Spirit, who was from eternity co-equal with the Father and the Son, make himself inferior because he covenanted to make the spirits of men holy by his grace and influence. Son and Holy Spirit are names of office, and the names of their offices certainly cannot lessen the dignity of their nature, but should rather exalt them in our eyes, for whose salvation they condescended to sustain these offices. Our blessed Lord was Jehovah, when he covenanted to be made flesh, and to become a Son: and the very nature and terms of the covenant prove, that at the making of it he must have been a Person of the self-existent essence, because he had thereby such offices committed to him, as none but the true God was able to sustain. The whole economy and government of the world, from the time of its creation to the final dissolution, was put into his hands; and therefore the scripture expressly assures us, that he created it, that he governs it by his providence, that he redeemed his people by his blood, and that he is to come again at the last day, in all his glory, to judge it. And he, who was almighty to create all things, who was all-wise to govern all things, who had infinite merit to redeem his body the church, and who is to be God the Judge of all at the last great day, certainly this almighty, this all-wise, this all-meritorious, and divine Judge must be self-existent. And being possessed of these offices, he might truly say, I AM; because he could not but have necessary existence in himself, who was the first cause, and who gave existence to every other being and thing.

What has been said in defence of the first proposition in the text may be summed up with this argument. The divine essence is self-existent; therefore the persons in the essence are also self-existent; but Jesus Christ is one of the persons in the essence, for he is frequently called Jehovah in the Old Testament, and the New declares, that he and the Father are one, consequently he is self-existent; from whence I raise this syllogism. Whoever is self-existent is the true God, but Jesus Christ is self-existent, therefore he is the true God. This is a plain argument, and is so evident upon scripture principles, that I defy all the Arians and Socinians in the world to answer it; for it seems as certain that Jesus Christ is a person of the self-existent essence, as that there is a self-existent essence. Christ is the great and eternal I AM, true and very God, equal in all things with the Father and the Holy Spirit as touching his Godhead; and therefore to the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, we ascribe equal dominion, and honour, and worship, now and for ever, according to the doctrine of the scripture and the constant practice of the Christian church. And,

Let no person think that this is a speculative point. It is not an indifferent thing whether you receive it or not; but your eternal state depends upon it, you must receive it, or perish for ever; for whosoever disbelieves it shall be damned. This may sound very harsh in the ears of free and candid disquisitors, but I really cannot soften it. I am not fond of thundering out damnation any more than men in these moderate times may he of hearing it, and you know that I very seldom have the word in my mouth; but there is certainly such a thing as damnation, and the Almighty has threatened to inflict it upon the deniers of Christ's divinity, and let men make ever so light of it, he will infallibly inflict it; and, therefore, I must again admonish you, that whoever does not believe Jesus Christ to be self-existent, and therehy equal to the Father, shall be damned. And does not the text declare the same thing? "They shall die in their sins," and this is so far from being anything short of damnation, that dying in sin is the very lowest state of infernal misery, as I am to prove under the

Second proposition. "If ye believe not that I AM," says Christ, "ye shall die in your sins." Dying in sin is a clear expression, whose meaning cannot easily be mistaken. It denotes the most dreadful state of departing sinners, who have no mediator or atonement in the world of spirits to which they are going, hut they leave this world with all the pollution and guilt of their crimes upon the soul; and when they appear before the trihunal of infinite justice, the horrid deformity and wickedness of them will then he manifest; they will then

have no robe to cover the offensive and nauseous leprosy of their impurities; their abominable filthiness will then break out, and how can the most holy and pure God look with delight upon those loathsome lepers? He declares he cannot. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity. He cannot behold them; and, therefore, they must be shut out of his presence, as the lepers were shut out of the camp; and since they never can be made clean, they must be shut out for ever. Nothing can purge the conscience from sin but that offering which perfecteth for ever. This alone cleanseth us from all sin; but this unbelievers reject, therefore their sin remaineth. They must answer for it at the bar of justice, and whatever punishment it deserves they must suffer it in soul and body, and, if there be truth in God, their punishment be eternal. These are his own words, at which one might reasonably think the heart of the most obdurate infidel would tremble. Isa. xxxiii. 13, 14. "Hear ye that are far off, what I have done, and ye that are near acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Who shall? Certainly they who die in their sins. Sin first kindled these flames of hell, and sinners must endure them. And the chief of sinners, the Arians and Socinians, must dwell with the devouring fire, and with everlasting burnings.

I have seen the deniers of Christ's divinity very warm and angry at this state of the case, and have heard them complain loudly of our want of charity. They do not love to be told of hell torments, and they think it very hard, that they should be sent to hell for a speculative point, (as they softly term rejecting Christ's self-existence,) quite an harmless opinion with them, a mere subject of debate and free inquiry. It may seem very light to them, but it is in fact of the same consequence as denying the being of God: and if they will make their free inquiries and debates about it, and after inquiring and debating, reject it, they should remember that they do this at the peril of their lives. Denying Christ to be self-existent is not a small crime, it is the greatest that a man can commit; for what is it to deny the king's title to the crown? Is it not high treason? And what is it then to deny the Godhead of the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords? Is not this high treason against the supreme Majesty of heaven? And when unbelievers deny the Godhead of Jesus Christ, try to rob him of his self-existence, erect societies on purpose to stab him with their insolent blasphemies, and would pull him out of his eternal throne, and then endeavour what in them lies to strip him of his divine glory, degrading and sinking him down into a mere creature, and trampling under foot, as if he were but dross and dung, the most adorable God of heaven and earth; what will you call these offences? Are they not overt acts of open rebellion and of high treason? And if the least of these against an earthly king would render the offenders unnatural rebels and worthy of death, must not the crimes increase in proportion to the infinite dignity of the king against whom they are committed? High treason against the Godhead of Jesus Christ, how much soever unbelievers may try to palliate it, is certainly an infinite crime, and if God be true, it will meet with an infinite punishment; for if ye believe not that I AM, says the self-existent God himself, ye shall die in your sins, and these unatoned for, shall not only exclude you from the glories of heaven, but shall also justly sentence you to the endless torments of hell.

As this method of proceeding against the deniers of Christ's self-existence is not, as they would insinuate, harsh and rigorous, but is founded in truth and equity; because every man is a sinner, and guilty in the sight of God, not only by actual, but also by original transgression, "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation," and therefore all men being under sentence of condemnation, want an atonement for their sins. This atonement is required by, and is to be made to, infinite justice, and whoever makes it must be an infinite Person, capable of doing an infinitely meritorious act; so that he cannot be any thing less than a Person of the self-existent essence. If he were a creature of ever so great dignity, the very highest in the rank of beings, yet as he is but a creature, he could do no action which could merit for another, much less which could have infinite merit; consequently he could make no atonement

to infinite justice, and therefore unless Christ be self-existent, we must all die in our sins, and answer for them before the tribunal of God: and the just wages of sin is death, death of the body to this world, and death both of body and soul from God and his glory in the next world, for ever and ever. And this is indeed the melancholy case of every infidel. He denies the virtue of Christ's merits to atone as God, and, of course, he can have no atonement; for nothing less than an infinite Being can make an infinite atonement; and the infidel, without such an atonement, must be under the guilt both of original and actual transgression. He has no sacrifice, no atonement, to propitiate the justice of God the Father, by whom a firm and sure decree has been in this case made and provided, that, "without shedding of blood there is no remission." But he rejects the merits of the blood of the Lamb of God, which has been shed for sin, and which alone can take away the sins of the world; for which reason there is no remission for him, but he dies in his sins, with all the pollution and the guilt of them upon his conscience, and when he appears at the bar of justice, he will find his Judge a jealous God, and a consuming fire. And how will he then be able to protect himself from the wrath of the Almighty? Offended Omnipotence he cannot escape, he cannot resist; and who can say what a degree of misery offended Omnipotence will inflict? Oh, it a dreadful thing, beyond imagination dreadful, to fall into the hands of the living God! and whoever rejects the divine merits of Christ's atonement, will feel his everlasting displeasure: for after rejecting them, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. And if he who despised Moses's law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" hath trodden under foot his divinity (as all infidels do), hath trampled, and even stamped upon the glory of the self-existent God, as if he was something baser than a worm, "and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." Doing despite unto the Spirit of grace is the last stage of infidelity, and may the almighty God keep every one of you from it, lest you should die in your sins and perish for ever.

I chose to finish the second proposition in the text with these striking words of St. Paul, (Heb. x. 26, 27, &c.) because they are clear and full to the point, and expressly declare the judgment and fiery indignation, which every one will meet with who treads under foot the Son of God. Let the infidel consider, whether he does not tread him under his feet, when he ridicules the almighty Creator of the world, and with treason blacker than ever was hatched in hell, tries to rob the eternal God of his divinity. Does not he account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, who sets no value upon the most precious blood of the Lamb of God? And must not he die in his sins, and rise from the dead in his sins, and appear in his sins at the last great day, and go with his sins to the place of eternal punishment, who, contrary to God's decree, has resolved to put his trial upon this issue; that without shedding of blood there may be remission? Before any remission can be obtained, there must not only be blood shed, but also blood of an infinite value; and there cannot be infinite value in any sacrifice, except in the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot. The merits of this unblemished and spotless Lamb the infidels deny, whereby they reject the only method which God has appointed for the remission of sins. This crime approaches so very near to doing despite to the Spirit of grace, and to grieving and quenching him, that my heart mourns for these deluded men, and I cannot but wish they were as much concerned for their own salvation as I am for them. I see their guilt, to which they are blind. I see their danger, against which they shut their own eyes. I behold them ready to die in their sins, and the pit of destruction open to receive them, they are on the very precipice, and in a moment may fall into hell. My dear fellow-creatures, would to God I could call you fellow-christians, if you have any love left for your immortal souls, stop and consider. Pray God to open your eyes, that you may see your danger. Oh! see how near you are to the pit! If you take one step more, you may perish for ever. And why will you choose eternal misery?

I call upon and entreat you, while there is yet a possibility of escaping it, to awaken your hopes and fears: if it be given you to throw down your arms and submit, still you may find mercy. For he is gracious and full of compassion. He has gifts for men, even for the rebellious. He can give the spirit of wisdom in the knowledge of himself. Ask, seek, and you shall find faith and repentance from his sovereign grace. With him is plenteous redemption. Oh that you may, from your own experience, acknowledge him to be a God almighty to pardon. And if none of these motives prevail with you to open your eyes, may he, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And now having gone through the argument, I intreat you, my brethren, to give me your favourable attention, while I am endeavouring to make some improvement of what has been said, and to bring it home with power and conviction to your hearts. The scripture which we have been considering is most awful and solemn, and holds out to us a doctrine of eternal importance, *viz.* that we must die in our sins, unless we believe the self-existence of Jesus Christ. This doctrine I divided into two propositions; under the first it was proposed to prove that Jesus Christ is a person of the self-existent essence, from whence it followed secondly, that every one must die in his sins, unless he believes Christ's self-existence. And if scripture and fair argument could prevail against men's prejudices and sins, these two propositions would appear as evident as the sun at noon day. Indeed they do appear with complete evidence to every true Christian; and I openly declare, that I am as fully convinced of the self-existence of Jesus Christ, as I am of any matter of fact, and therefore with this full conviction upon my mind, it was incumbent upon me to speak with great openness and freedom to those persons, if there be any of them among you, who deny the self-existence of Jesus Christ. And I hope he will second my intreaties with his grace, and accompany them with his divine blessing, while I am calling upon you once more to consider and to weigh impartially the arguments which have been now laid before you. They contain a very small part of the evidence of our Lord's divinity. The scripture has offered us several proofs, which have not been at present touched upon; but I hope enough has been said to convince you, if your minds lay open to conviction. The great infidel objection against Christ's self-existence is taken from the unity of the divine essence; this unity we allow, for it is written, Deut. vi. 4, "The Lord our God is one Lord, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah;" but then we maintain that the unity of the essence cannot exclude personality, unless it could be demonstrated, that the manner in which the essence exists will not admit of any persons in it. But this you cannot demonstrate. It is impossible to demonstrate it; because you do not know the manner of the existence of any spiritual being, and consequently it is impossible for you to demonstrate, that the scripture account of personality is false, and yet at the peril of your eternal salvation you will venture to deny what it is impossible you should disprove. Do you not see what an inconsistent and absurd part you herein act? Do you not openly fight against reason, as well as against scripture and your own happiness? You have not the shadow of an argument against Christ's divinity, and yet you are not afraid to commit high treason against his supreme Majesty who is almighty to punish. Why, my brethren, will you fight against the Almighty? Rebel no longer, throw down your arms, submit to Jesus, prostrate yourselves before him, and acknowledge him to be the self-existent God. And

Let it be no hindrance to your owning his divinity, that the scripture calls him a Son, Son of God, Son of man, &c. for Son is a name of office, and not of nature; it is not to give you an idea of the manner of his divine existence, but of the nature of his divine actions. He was the true self-existent God; he was Jehovah from eternity, but he took the name of Son, when he covenanted to become a Son, and to be made flesh for us and for our salvation; so that it is a name of economy, descriptive not of his nature, but of his office. This is the scripture doctrine. And there is not one infidel objection against the self-existence of Jesus Christ, but what may be easily solved upon this state of the

case. I intreat you, therefore, to examine it carefully, and if you will give it a fair hearing, laying all prejudice aside, you will not be able to resist the force and evidence of it.

But if you will shut your hearts against conviction, rooted and grounded so deeply and strongly in infidelity that no arguments can move you; yet if scripture has lost its influence, will not self-love make some impression upon you? When the danger draws near, and your own souls are ready to perish, certainly you ought then to begin to be concerned for your own welfare. And does not the danger come near enough to strike your fears, when you are dying in your sins? When you are guilty of a crime, the certain consequence of which (unrepented of) is everlasting misery? And if Jesus Christ be not your God, you will have no atonement, no Mediator after death, but must answer for every sin, which you have committed, at the bar of infinite justice, and you may read your sentence among the records of infallible truth—"The unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death," (Rev. xxi. 8.) This scripture will as surely be fufilled, as God is true; and he will be almighty to fulfil it in your destruction: for are you not unbelieving? Do you not disbelieve the first article of the Christian faith? And why then should you hope to escape the punishment here threatened to unbelief? You have no reasonable hope. God, who cannot lie, must execute his threatenings. And do you think it prudent and safe to make the trial, whether he be a God of truth? if you believe not, yet he abideth faithful. If you deny him, he also will deny you. And when he disowns you for his, justice must seize you and deliver you over to the tormentors, that this scripture may be fulfilled in your punishment. Oh! my brethren, if your souls be dear and precious in your own eyes, do not choose hell torments? Why will you die in your sins, and go deliberately into the lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever? Might not one infer from your conduct, that you were in love with hell? For you cannot prove that Jesus Christ is not God. It is impossible to prove it; and why then will ye deny his divinity, and with overt acts of high treason attempt to rob him of his essential glory? Why will you act such an absurd, such a wicked part, and destroy yourselves?

If I have not been able to offer any thing sufficient to awaken and convince you, I have therefore more reason, in the last place, to pray for you. And I am sure all believers will join heartil with me in prayer to God for your conversion. We cannot but mourn over your present guilt, and your approaching ruin, and pour out our requests before the throne of grace for you, because we are assured that you have departed from the living God. And let us now, my Christian brethren, conclude, as we always begin, with looking up to God for his blessing, that our labours may not be not in vain in the Lord.

O most adorable Jesus, our Almighty God and Saviour, who hast declared, that unless ye believe that I AM, ye shall die in your sins, we bless and praise thee for giving us grace to believe in thy self-existence. Keep us, we beseech thee, steadfast in this faith, and grant that it may not dwell in our heads, and rest there as a speculative point of science, but enable it to operate upon our hearts, and rest there to produce in us all thy sweet and heavenly tempers, making us holy as thou art holy. And, O Lord, be pleased to awaken and convert all the deniers of thy divinity, and convince them that thou art a God indeed, by the happy work of thy good Spirit upon their hearts, turning them from the error of their ways, and bringing every one of them into thy flock, that we may become one fold under one Shepherd; and may with one heart and voice give thanks and praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the holy, blessed and glorious Trinity; to whom be equal honour, and worship, and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

All my springs are in thee.—Psalm lxxxvii. 7.

We are called upon, at this time, to celebrate the birthday of Jehovah-Jesus —God manifest in the flesh—a day which the Lord hath made famous for ever. Big with miracles—big with blessings. It was the great purpose of the covenant of the eternal Three, that one of the divine persons should be made man, and that thereby every perfection of the Godhead should shine forth in its full glory for evermore. When it was proclaimed in heaven, "Let all the angels of God worship him," the elect angels bowed with thankful hearts to the infinite condescension of Immanuel. They blessed and worshipped him for humbling himself to be made man: and when in the fulness of time he was born of a woman, then the whole multitude of the heavenly host came down to keep his birthday, praising God, and saying, "Glory be to God in the highest, peace upon earth, and good will towards men." Such was the angels' hymn. So sweetly did they sing their God and ours. Oh that we may find some of the same sweetness and melody in our souls! May we so meditate upon the birth of our dearest Lord, that our faith may be exercised upon it, and we may enjoy its rich blessings in our hearts and in our lives.

And to this end I have chosen a hymn composed upon this joyful occasion. The Psalmist is led in spirit to see the future birth of Jehovah, and he is ravished with the happy prospect. We read of many kings who desired to see God incarnate. David was one of the many. He saw it by faith, and was glad. His soul was in raptures within him, and he speaks of the coming of God in the flesh, just as Simeon did when he had him in his arms. They both had him dwelling in their hearts, and that made them speak with their mouths with so much affection. Simeon had lived to a blessed time. He saw the Lord Christ, and took him up in his arms. He wanted to see nothing more upon earth—"Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." David saw the same with the eyes of his faith, and experienced that all his springs of grace and glory were in the incarnate God. In him, as the fountain head, the infinite ocean of life and comfort, and from him, flow the streams—all of them—whatever can do any good to a poor sinner in time or in eternity, it is all in and from God manifest in the flesh. All my fresh springs are in thee. Blessings on his dear love, that he has enabled one to believe this, and in a measure to enjoy it. Oh may your souls bless him, together with mine, and may a fresh spring of his grace flow into your hearts, to increase your faith and your enjoyment of his precious salvation, while I am,

First, Endeavouring to open the meaning of the Psalmist's words, and then,

Secondly, To bring the doctrine which they contain into practice and experience.

1. A short view of the psalm will be the best way to come at the meaning of our text. The subject is the birth of Jesus, from which blessings are derived to his people—great—numberless—everlasting blessings. The title prefixed is,

"A psalm to be sung by the sons of Korah," *i. e.* of fallen man. Korah

signifies the state in which trees are during winter, when stripped of their verdure and fruit. In the same sense it is used for the bald head, when age or sickness have deprived it of its glory, and left it without hair. This is a lively description of fallen man. He has lost his pristine beauty and fruitfulness. When he left God, and turned to his own ways, he became like the trees of the field in winter, from which the genial warmth of the sun is withdrawn, or like the head, which, by the abating of the natural heat and vigour, is left naked and bald. But being brought to a right sense of this, and finding himself stripped of all the glory which the first Adam had in paradise, he has been led to seek the restoration of his nature, and has obtained of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, a much better state than he had lost. Every such person is entitled to sing this sacred hymn, and he is called upon to do it. The name of the person, whom he is to celebrate, is not mentioned at first, but is soon discovered by the character given of him.

V. 1. "He shall have his foundation upon the holy mountains."—He shall be built up, and his feet shall stand upon Mount Sion. The temple which was founded there, was the type of his humanity. An infallible expositor has so explained it. "Destroy this temple," says Christ, "and in three days I will build it up." "But this," St. John declares, "he spake of the temple of his body" It was as certain he would have a body prepared for him, as the temple had a foundation upon Mount Sion; and he would infallibly appear to fulfil every thing there typified of him, by which means his Father would become the Father of all his people, as it follows:

V. 2. "Jehovah loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."—He loveth Sion for the sake of Sion's king, the Son of his love, who was there to appear. The Redeemer shall come to Sion. And of his coming, of what he was to be, and to do, and to suffer, the temple and its services were instituted signs and types. On his holy hill he had placed his sanctuary: there was his visible presence in the holy of holies; and there God had determined, in very deed, to dwell with men on the earth. For these reasons he had marked out Sion with his special love, and had styled her the city of God.

V. 3. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah."—The church is called the city of God long before, and long since, the congregation of faithful people worshipped upon Mount Sion. We read of Abraham, and the other heirs of promise, that they looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker was God. And St. Paul speaks of the church of Christ in the very same terms used in this psalm. "Ye are come," says he to believers, "to Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven." The city of God then is this one true church; part of the congregation is triumphant; part militant here on earth; part not yet brought into being; but all the parts make up the whole. They were all given by the Father to the Son. The Son accepted them, and wrote all their names in his book, and for them he lived and died. The Holy Spirit in due time calls them effectually, and brings them by believing the Son's salvation, to enjoy the Father's love in time, and to show forth the praises of Father, Son, and Spirit in the city of our God for evermore, Selah: exalt him, take notice that ye exalt him for this; and remember, whatever glorious things are spoken of the church, all the glory must be ascribed to its Head and King—God over all, blessed for ever. Blessings on him that he has a church. Eternal blessings will be his for gathering his church out of all nations: for so it follows in his own words.

V. 4. "I will cause it to be remembered by them who shall know me in Rahab and Babylon; behold Philistia and Tyre, the people of Ethiopia: this name was born."—The name is the same as the Word who was made flesh, God incarnate, and who will have a people in all these lands. They shall know him, and he will make them remember, that Jehovah was manifest in the flesh for them. He was born indeed in Judea. There they saw his glory: but he was also a light to lighten the Gentiles. His church, before he was born, his church since he was born, has an equal right to his nativity. Rahab and Babylon, Philistia and Tyre, the people of Ethiopia and the people of England, can say, "The name born in

Judea is our Saviour, and our God," and we rejoice, with all the friends of Sion, that he was born there.

V. 5. "And of Sion it shall be said, a person and a person," God and man, "shall be born in her, and he himself, the Most High, shall perfectly establish her."—O what a glorious subject of praise is here! The name born is Wonderful. He has two natures in him. Perfect God, and perfect man, in one Christ. He was born in Sion, in the Jewish church, and therefore born, that being man, he might live and die for man, and being also the most High God, he might give infinite value and dignity to his life and death. What mercies are these! Who can tell the number or the greatness of them? God incarnate—born to save, to save sinners—the worst and vilest—to work out salvation perfectly, and then perfectly to apply it: and that nothing might be wanting for their establishment in the faith, he himself, the Most High, has undertaken to keep them by his mighty power, till he bring them to eternal salvation. Oh bless the Lord with me, my dear hearers, and let us magnify his name together, both for the mercies themselves, and also for the provision made for them in the everlasting covenant, which is the next point in the hymn.

V. 6. "Jehovah did record it, when he was registering the people, That this name was to be born."—It was the great counsel and purpose of the eternal Three; it was entered in the records of heaven; and it was revealed in the great charter of grace, that this wonderful Person should be born—Immanuel—God with us. To his birth Jehovah had respect, and considered his undertakings for his people, when he registered them in the court of heaven, and enrolled their names in the book of life. God incarnate is the head of his body the church; he is the first-born among his many brethren: he was first chosen, they were chosen in him; he the head of all election, they the members under him; he born for them, therefore they have a new birth; he lived for them on earth, therefore they live with him in heaven; he died for them on the cross, therefore they cannot die under the curse of sin; he is in the fulness of glory, therefore they shall be glorified together with him. In all things he must have the pre-eminence, and he richly deserves it. What a debt! who can count the sum you owe him, whom he has ennobled, made the brethren of Immanuel, and in him sons of God, registered as such with the Father's own hand, and declared to be his act and deed? the register given to the Son, and called the Lamb's book; every name in it as dear to him as the apple of his own eye, and will be kept with equal care and love. His almighty power guards the register; he will not suffer any blot in it; not a name altered: not a name lost. Oh what mercies are these! Who, who can count the sum of them? My friends, has the grace of God bestowed them upon you? Do you believe Jesus was born for you? He was, if your dependence be on his holy life for your righteousness, and on his precious blood-shedding for your pardon. And think then what Christmas is to you! What a festival of joy and thankfulness! See that you make much melody in your hearts unto the Lord. Oh sing unto him, and praise him; join all your brethren in earth and heaven, who are now giving honour and glory to God and the Lamb; for with this strain our hymn concludes:

V. 7. "And the singers, as well as the performers on instruments shall say, All my springs are in thee."—All good flows from God incarnate; he is the fountain head of grace and glory: and whoever upon earth is receiving out of his fulness, he is ready with the melody of his heart, and with the concert of his lips and life, to ascribe every good to the birth of Jesus. All my springs, says he, are in thee; every stream of comfort flows from thee. Thou art the fruitful source of my every blessing. Oh give me, Jehovah Jesus, give me deeper humility, that I may with better praise be exalting the God of my salvation. And whoever is receiving out of the same fulness in heaven, he is perfectly convinced that all his springs are in God Jesus. It is the one employment, the very highest blessedness of the redeemed of the Lord, as they are receiving fresh mercies, to be ever returning them back in thankfulness. This is their very heaven. All the harpers, playing round the throne with their golden harps, strike their highest notes to this heart-felt truth, "All our springs are in thee. Whatever brought us here, whatever we are here, is entirely from thee: our royal crowns, our salva-

tion robes, our palms of everlasting victory, our perfect conformity to God, and our perfect enjoyment of God—all, all is from thee, our dearest Immanuel This satisfying joy of heaven, great and endless as it is, yet is but a stream out of thy fulness; all springs from thee; to thee be the glory for ever and ever. Hallelujah. Angels, and the church of the first born say Amen."

Such is our Christmas hymn; and what do you think of it, my dearly beloved? You have heard that it is a song of praise for a birth which brought with it every blessing of earth and heaven. Your title to, and your enjoyment of, all good come to you by the nativity of Jesus. Do you then read your title clear, and is your enjoyment happy? Are you now drawing your comforts fresh from this spring head? Oh that you may consider it, and be pleased with it, as the blessed Trinity were. Heaven beheld it, and smiled again on man, sinful man.—Justice said, There I am satisfied, yea I am well pleased.—Truth looked down, when this heavenly plant sprung out of the earth, and said, He will vindicate mine honour; the sinner may be saved, and yet I shall be true in all my sayings. Mercy and Truth met together; Righteousness and Peace kissed each other. Every offended attribute looked with delight on his birth, and saw that they should be infinitely and everlastingly glorified in saving sinners. Oh blessed Christmas day! what a festival was it in heaven; and when the sinner looks upon this birth by faith, it is a heavenly festival to him upon earth: he sees a Child born, and a Son given for him, who is also the almighty God; and he is satisfied with the obedience and with the sacrifice of his divine Saviour. His conscience is at peace; his heart is happy, he rests in his love; enjoys his Jesus, and walks in sweet friendship and holy fellowship with him, seeking to cultivate a nearer and closer intimacy by faith, till Jesus bring him to full enjoyment in glory.

But the improvement of these truths deserves a more particular consideration. I proceed therefore to the

Second head of discourse, which was to bring the doctrine, contained in our text, into practice and experience.

The doctrine is this—The birth of Jesus Christ is the spring of all blessings in time and in eternity; it is the fountain from which flow all the streams of grace and glory. From which doctrine I would draw these two inferences:

First, If God had not been incarnate, sinners could have had no good; and

Secondly, All good comes from his birth—"All my springs are in thee."

1. When sin entered into the world, there was nothing good left in it, and from that day forward no good was to be found, but from the birth of Jehovah Jesus. A sinner may seek it elsewhere. Every sinner does: for indeed all sin consists in turning from God our Saviour to something else, and in seeking that happiness in it, which is only to be found in him. The one good thing for the sons of men is Jesus. And nothing can do them the least good, till they be pardoned sinners in him, and partakers of the Father's love through him. Now look round the creation, my beloved hearers, survey every subject which flatters you with promised good. Examine it narrowly, and before you believe its flatteries ask it—"Thou seeming delightful creature canst thou pardon my sins, and save me from hell?" If it speak the truth, it will reply, Not I; who can forgive sin but God only? Well, then, if you have sinned, and being under the wrath and curse of God, a pardon must be had, or else you are ruined for ever, what should you be seeking first, what should you be happy in obtaining, but a pardon? Away with all fond hopes of sensual pleasures, or earthly possessions, or the esteem of men; what good can these, what good can all the world do you, if you should die unpardoned. and the wrath and curse of God should justly fall and abide upon you for ever? Oh think on this, and when Pleasure puts on its sweet smiles, and with a bewitching face says—"Come take me to your bosom—Oh what a paradise of delight will I give you, only try me and you will find a very heaven in mine embrace." Keep off, thou fair tempter; answer me—Dost thou come with a pardon for my sinful soul, and art thou the heavenly messenger of this good news? Oh no—every delight, amusement, diversion, whatever mistaken man have stamped the name of pleasure upon, they did it for this very reason; because it keeps them from feeling their sins, and from seeking the pardon of them. So was Dives deluded: he was gay and jolly—every day was a feast, and every hour

brought some fresh entertainment. He did not feel his sins, till he felt their punishment: but now the remembrance of his pleasures makes his torments more tormenting. Young people, take warning from him. If pleasure was on God's side, it would say to you—Do not you look at me for happiness—do not expect it from your senses. It is in Jesus—all the springs of true pleasure are in him. Old people, do not let the world deceive you; all is emptiness, and will prove vexation, which leaves you unpardoned; go where you will in quest of happiness, you will be disappointed, till you come to Jesus. Your appetite will increase by running after the creature, and your thirst will grow more painful. You will contract fresh guilt, and lay up fuel for greater misery. The Lord God convince you all of these truths. Oh that you may feel the importance of them, and may be satisfied, that nothing can do you any good, unless you are pardoned sinners in Jesus, and made happy believers in him.

What does Christmas return for every year, but to preach those lessons: and if you have never spent one Christmas in learning them, oh may the Lord God now open your ears to hear the voice of truth. Pray mind, sin is your misery, Jesus is the only Saviour. He was born to save. He took this dearest of all his names, and was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins. This salvation you want; every one of you want it alike—you are lost for ever without it. Sirs, what then do you intend to do? Will you come and honour his birth-day, by putting in for your share of his salvation? Are you really sensible that you want it, and are you indeed seeking it? Thanks be to him, if he has put this into your hearts. May he spread the glories of his nativity, and endear himself to your souls by giving you this day to believe in him. Oh that his Spirit may make this such a Christmas as you never knew before—May he enable you by faith to keep the feast with gladness, and to experience your own interest in the blessings of the birth of Jesus.

Is there any one here thinking thus—"Let them draw their comforts from Christ who will, I know of another spring, and to it will I go—I am quite easy, and enjoy myself in my present way of life, and I have no desire to change it: I will keep my Christmas just as I used to do, and I will be as merry and as happy as I can." Poor deluded mortal! What, art thou easy in thy sins, and happy in the enjoyment of them—easy and happy without a Saviour, without a pardon? Canst thou sport and play on the very brink of endless ruin? Oh desperate delusion! Why, man, is not thy case bad? Thou art in danger, but insensible of it. Indeed there is but one case worse. Thou art living as they did who are now in hell. They went on thoughtless in sin, till vengeance overtook them: and thou art treading fast in their steps. May God stop thee by his grace; may he save thee from destruction, and bestow freely upon thee the blessings which believers receive from the birth of Jesus; which is the next practical remark.

God incarnate is the fountain head, and all the springs are in and from him. This is the testimony of the Father concerning his Son—all scripture confirms it—believers in all ages have experienced it—and it comes to-day with a seasonable address to your hearts, and to mine. Do we experience it? Can each of you say of the incarnate God, as David does, "All my fresh springs are in thee?" Come, sirs, to a free inquiry; and let the word of God be our guide. To what springs do you go for your comforts and blessings? Do you fetch all from the finished work of the God-man? Are you trusting to his blood for pardon, to his righteousness for acceptance, to his power to keep you, and to his love to bless you? And would you, God helping you, draw every good from Jesus, and have it fresh, grace for grace, out of his fulness? Does your conscience say—"This is my faith, here I rest my soul: on the atonement and obedience of Immanuel I place my dependence, and I renounce every other hope?" Then upon the warrant of God's word you may conclude, that Jesus is yours. He is your Saviour. Your faith in him is the operation of his own Spirit, and your title to him and to his fulness is certain. Oh praise him for this unspeakable gift; and wait on him for grace to keep your evidences clear, that you may see, without doubt or wavering, your right and title to Jesus, and may therefore be making free use of what God has freely given you in him.

This was the prophet's experience. He not only knew the springs of grace, which are in Jesus, but he also enjoyed them. It pleased the Father to lay up all fulness of covenant blessings in his Son, as God-man. It pleased the eternal Spirit to witness this in the scripture, and to seal his witness upon the hearts of believers, enabling them to come to this fulness, to live upon it, and to be satisfied with it. Thus the blessed Trinity by a free grant have made over this fulness to every one that believeth. They have laid it all up in King Mediator for use. Believers, you may draw as much water as you please out of this well of salvation. The greatest honour you can do it, is to take the water of life freely, and abundantly. It is given to you as your property; and a man may certainly make free with what is his own. The spring head is yours, the streams are yours —ye are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ—you are put into possession of this vast estate, and it is expected of you, that you live (like a king's son) upon the income.

This is the good old Christmas keeping. It is enjoying the blessings of Christ's birth. It does not consist in feasting and dancing, in diversion and pleasure, in cards and plays, but in living by faith upon the springs of grace, which are in Christ Jesus. A true believer is now partaking of them. He tastes their sweetness. He is fed and nourished with their consolations. He has as real communion with Christ in his heart, as he has with the things of this world in his body. He actually receives out of Christ's fulness streams of grace, and being refreshed with them, he feels himself happy in the well-spring of his salvation.

My friends, would you put singular honour upon this day, then follow the prophet's example. Whatever blessing comes to sinners from the Saviour's birth, see that you enjoy it: make use of the springs which are in him: you want them all. And you know, a thirsty man does not want water to look at, but to drink. Go to the spring-head, and drink freely. Apply its healing streams for all the purposes of salvation, and continue so to do from day to day, never give over receiving out of the fulness of Christ grace for grace, till you receive out of it glory for glory.

Are you made alive? He is the fountain of life: he was born, that you might be born again. When you look back, and survey what you was once, and now see, how he has quickened you from a death in trespasses and sins, oh remember what you owe him for the exceeding riches of his grace. The water of life, the quickening influence came from his fulness. The water which followed the Jewish camp, flowed through the rock, and that rock was Christ—through Christ came that sovereign stream, which made you alive—through Christ it flows on: the distinguishing grace that keeps you alive, still flows through the rock Christ. Keep this fresh upon your mind: you are indebted for the free gift of life, with every comfort of it in earth and heaven, to the birth of Immanuel. Let the experience of this encourage you to trust in him; he has made you alive, and because he lives, you shall live also. It is his mind and will, that the stream should never be dried up; from whence it flows, thither it shall return; view it thus, never look at the stream but as inseparably connected with the fountain: use it as such, as a well of water springing up into everlasting life, make free with it. It is a fountain opened to wash your spotted soul, and to make it clean for ever: when the soldier pierced our Saviour's side upon the cross, forthwith there came out blood and water, not water only to cleanse from the filth, but blood also to justify from the guilt of sin. This was the day prophesied of, when there should be a royal fountain opened in Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness: all the springs come from it, and it is open, it stands open, free for use. Believers, see ye live under the experience of its sovereign virtue. Have nothing to do in the matter of cleansing or justifying your soul, but with it alone. The water out of the side of the crucified Jesus can wash you, and you shall be whiter than snow: the blood out of the side of the crucified Jesus can justify you from all things; through faith in it, you shall be cleansed from all sin, and shall have eternal redemption. These are the springs of God's own appointment; and he makes them effectual to this very day. See then that you put honour upon them this Christmas. Make use of nothing to wash your soul, or to justify it, but this

water and blood—whose virtue is sovereign, whose efficacy is everlasting. And look well, my brethren, to the effects which should follow from their daily use. Do you partake of them? Is your conscience satisfied—is the charge of guilt silenced—are your fears kept under—knowing that the Father is reconciled unto you, and accounts you clean and righteous in the Son of his love? Oh may you bring him much praise and glory: give him his honour, and say from your heart "All my springs, God Jesus, are in thee."

And being saved from the filth and from the guilt of sin, proceed in your experience. There are comforts out of number, to be drawn from this same fountain. The incarnate God is the God of all comfort: the angels said to the shepherds—Behold, I bring you glad things of great joy, great indeed, tidings of the greatest joy the heart can feel on this side of heaven: for the love of the Father to you, your sense of it, your growing sense of it, with all its comforts, are streams which flow from the birth of Immanuel. If he had never been born, you never could have known peace with God, nor love to God. A sensible sinner cannot draw true comfort from any thing, until being justified by faith he have peace with God. And a believer cannot be happy in the love of God, but as he sees God is reconciled and loving to him; so that peace and love, with their sweet fruits, cannot be preserved with comfort, but by faith in Christ Jesus. Seek your comforts, then, my brethren, in the fulness of God Jesus. Expect to find them nowhere else; whatever promises you comfort, if it does not flow from him, away with it; it is unholy joy; throw it to the moles and to the bats. Have to do with nothing, either to make or to keep your heart happy, but the finished salvation of the incarnate God; and while you live by faith upon him, comfort will refresh your soul, pure, holy, heavenly comforts, administered to you as you want them, by the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

Go then, my beloved, and make trial of our Saviour's fulness; see whether it does not fully answer the scripture character of it: experience will soon convince you, that it is a spring of never-failing consolation. If you make up all your comforts in Jesus, you live at the fountain head; you can lack nothing but more faith, that with more joy you may draw water out of this spring of salvation: for here is joy to comfort you, even in sorrow; light in darkness; yea, life in death.

If you be in outward distress, here is inward consolation. When the conscience is at peace, and the heart is happy in Jesus, troubles cannot take away, but generally increase communion with him. If you be in inward distress, arising from spiritual trials and conflicts, still Jesus has abundant consolation. The believing soul will not faint, which rests secure on the work of Jesus: it will certainly overcome, which makes Jesus its refuge and strength; yea, those very trials and conflicts, rightly managed, will work together for present as well as for future good, as you may read, 2 Cor. i. to v. 11. If your distress be sickness, it is grievous to the flesh, but profitable to the spirit. This is generally a growing time; the believer becomes better acquainted with his physician; is forced to call him often in for his advice; cannot avoid submitting to his care and management, and is led, in the absence of creature comforts, to a more intimate enjoyment of the grace and love of Jesus.

If the distress be sickness unto death, Jesus is the prince of life, and he has comforts for the dying. The body may fall asleep, but the soul is then alive, and connected with the spring of consolation. Death does not cut it off from, but unites it for ever to, the fountain of life: from Jesus it enjoyed life by faith in grace: from Jesus it enjoys life by sense in glory. The manner and the place of enjoying it are changed; but it is the same life flowing from the same Jesus. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory over the fear and over the power of death, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

These are Christmas comforts—pure and holy joys, to be had in cases of distress, outward and inward, in the time of sickness, and in the hour of death: believers may be happy under all: they may find comforts in Jesus provided and laid up for them in him; and therefore they will never want comforts, no, not in the worst of times, but when they are misled and seek it from other things. To whom, then, my brethren, should you go but to him in whom all fulness dwells?

He has every thing to give, that can keep your conscience at peace, that can make your heart happy, and that can give you victory over your sins and miseries through life and death. These blessings are to be had only in Jesus, and he has them in his fulness for you. May you receive out of it much grace, and daily find, that all your fresh springs of comfort are in the incarnate God.

These are some of the triumphs of Christmas, but the greatest, the crown and glory of the rest, is still behind. The comforts of heaven, as well as of earth, are the fruits of his birth. There is a river that maketh glad the city of God—a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. All the streams of grace and salvation run out of this river, and run into it again; they take their rise from covenant love, and lead back to the enjoyment of covenant love: they proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb—of God, not absolute, but as united to the Lamb; as incarnate in man's nature to live and die a sacrifice for man. This Lamb of God is the spring-head from which all grace flows, and keeps flowing on, never stops, till it run into glory; and there the saints keep Christmas for ever. The blessed company of them round the throne, made glad in the city of God with the water of life, are deriving all their springs from Jehovah manifest in the flesh; they are singing in harmony with us the same song of praise: all the melody of heaven, every voice, and every harp, sounding in sweetest concert, give honour, and blessing, and praise, and thanks to him that was slain, and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood. To him be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The good Lord help us to join them: oh that we may now have our share in their joys. And why not? Is not their God our God?—their Saviour our Saviour also? Why then should not we praise him together with them, and rejoice with them in his salvation? Our debt is as great, our relation to him as inseparable as theirs; our blessings from him as certain: our springs are all from him as well as theirs. May our Christmas kept by faith, be to his honour and glory, as like to their heavenly festival as may be. May all of you, who have heard to-day of the birth of the incarnate God, receive the glad tidings with great joy: may you go away, and keep the feast to the Lord with humble thankful hearts, and experience the blessings of Christ's birth in your lives. Living and dying, in earth and heaven, may you find all your fresh springs of grace and glory in the incarnate Jesus. To him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three co-equal Persons in one Godhead, be equal honour and praise ascribed for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

Elihu spake moreover unto Job, and said, Thinkest thou this to be right that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?—Job xxxv. 1, 2.

The book of Job is full of Christian knowledge. It was given us by the Holy Spirit, and recorded by Moses, the man of God, and inserted in the volume of sacred scripture, that it might be a standing lesson to the church of Christ: for there is one plain truth pursued from the beginning to the end of it, without any digression. The point debated between Job and his three friends is this, "Whether man can make himself so righteous as to merit happiness from God." This is the single proposition which they discuss. The three friends take the negative side of the question; Job holds it in the affirmative: he maintains, against all their arguments, not only that man could make himself so righteous, but also that he himself was that very righteous man; and he declares, that if he were called before the throne of God, he would even there plead his own righteousness. "My righteousness," says he, "I hold fast, and will not let it go;" and in the 29th, 30th, and 31st chapters, he makes a long catalogue and boasting of his good works, and wishes he might be weighed with an even balance, that God might know his integrity. In this proud, vain opinion of self-righteousness he obstinately persisted until Elihu appeared. Job had often

desired to have his cause heard before the Almighty; and Elihu, in the entrance of his speech, tells him, "Behold I am, according to thy wish, in God's stead, and am come to hear the cause, and to put an end to it, that it may never be again debated while the world endures." Accordingly Elihu lays the indictment against Job in these words, "that he justified himself more than God:" he proves the indictment from Job's own words in the text, "Moreover Elihu answered and said, Thinkest thou this to be right that thou saidst, my righteousness is more than God's?" Elihu brings such arguments against self-righteousness as thoroughly convinced Job of his error; and, ashamed of his former pretences to justify himself, and abashed and confounded at his past conduct, he cries out in the anguish of his soul, "Lord, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

This humble, penitent temper becomes us all; and our vain, corrupt nature has so many little risings of pride, and so many temptations to self-sufficiency, that we cannot be too often showing men, that, in the sight of God, we are all sinners, and the best of us must plead guilty. This useful lesson let us now learn. I hope our present meditations on the book of Job will bring it to your hearts, and if any of you are come here with self-righteous notions, imagining you can justify yourselves by your own good works, I hope the grace of God will convince you, as he did Job, and enable you to declare with him, "Lord, I abhor myself," &c. Let us consider, then, the scope and design of the book of Job, and meditate seriously upon those arguments which the Holy Spirit has there treasured up for our instruction in righteousness. The whole book turns upon this one point, Whether it be in man's power to make himself so righteous that he should merit happiness from God? This is the single question debated; and, because the determination was to be final, and it was to be a leading case against self-righteousness unto the end of the world, therefore no circumstance was omitted that could make the evidence full and complete. The first striking circumstance is in the moral character of Job, which rendered him a proper person in every respect to be brought to the bar of strict justice, and to urge what he had to say, in support of his plea of self-righteousness. He was a man of an exemplary life, so strict in all the outward duties, and he adorned all his virtues by doing so much good in the world, that Providence chose to put him upon the trial of self-righteousness. For, if a person of his great moral attainments should be brought in guilty, then all pretences would be cut on for ever, of bringing this plea again before the tribunal of God; because we have here the decree made; it is here left upon record, and all objections against it will certainly be over-ruled. Job's character was very extraordinary; when he was put upon his trial, nothing appeared against him but the charge of self-righteousness, in other respects he was quite a saint; he was not accused of the breach of any outward duty, either to God, to his neighbour, or to himself. His three friends often charge him with the commission of some secret hidden sin; but Job always defends himself, and insists upon his innocence: and since God, when he examined him, brought nothing of this kind to light, we may therefore conclude he was not guilty. His own account of his moral character, in the chapters before referred to, is very particular; he insists upon his exact, careful practice of almost all the social virtues, and appeals diligently for the truth of what he says of himself to his three friends, who were not guilty of flattering him: and they make no reply. His moral character stands clear, and free from objection. And the testimony which the Holy Spirit gives of him, ascribes to him higher attainments than morality. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." These are very great encomiums in themselves, and greater as coming from God, to be perfect, to walk uprightly, to fear God, and to flee from evil: these seem to be the very highest attainments of this mortal life, for they include every branch of duty: whatever is praiseworthy in the righteous, moral, or private virtues, comes under this description, therefore we must place Job far above the common level. None of you will pretend to take to yourselves the illustrious character which God gives him. Can any of you appeal to your own conscience, and declare with truth and sincerity, "I am

perfect and upright, I fear God, and fly from evil," as Job did? I cannot believe there is any man living upon earth who has a legal claim to this perfection and uprightness: let every one speak for himself; I declare that I have no claim. The religious and moral attainments of Job were far beyond what we commonly acquire. And as his virtues were singular, he was therefore put upon a trial which required a man of the most singular virtues. He was called upon to justify himself, which he had the best claim to do, because he could plead a perfect and upright life, in the discharge of all the outward duties: and this he did plead; but was cast and found guilty. I doubt not but it may seem very extraordinary to some persons, that so great and good a man could fall into this dangerous error: but his greatness and his goodness exposed him to it, and were his strong temptations to ascribe righteousness to himself rather than to God: these were indeed the only temptations which he had not overcome, and he was more liable to these because he had overcome all the rest. The tempter therefore laid this snare for him, and Job unhappily fell into it. He began to see too much of himself. His eyes were too much intent on his regular sober life, and upon comparing himself with his neighbours, he found he so far out-stripped them, that now and then a vain thought of superiority crept into his heart; and, finding a welcome reception, it invited the other attendants of pride to enter. Pride, at first, only made him more strict and regular in his outward walking; but some took occasion to flatter him with many pleasing compliments, and missed no opportunity of suggesting, that so great and good a man would certainly be highly favoured of God, a reward equal to his virtues he could not fail of meriting. This flattery easily got admission into the heart; and, by degrees, Job entertained still more and more exalted notions of his own attainments, until he, at last, verily believed that he could justify himself. He was fully persuaded his good works were, in number and degree, so very eminent, that he might claim his reward as a matter of debt. Accordingly, he entered his plea upon this footing, and the debate between him and his three friends turns upon this single point, and after they were not able to settle it, Elihu appears, and soon convinces Job of his dangerous error, and his conviction led him to a thorough repentance, upon which he was pardoned, and received into mercy.

The subtle spirit does not show his wisdom and cunning in any thing so much as in suiting his temptation to our tempers. He raises his strongest battery against our weakest side. If we live in sin, then he tempts us to go on in sin, promising us a season of repentance at some distant time. If we have left sin, and are walking in the ways of righteousness, then he tempts us to think that we are more righteous than we are. And how carefully should we watch over our hearts, and how earnestly implore the Divine Spirit to assist us, since Job, so great and good a man, fell into this temptation. A perfect upright man, one who feared God, and fled from evil, was yet tempted to think himself so righteous that he wanted not the righteousness of Christ. That this was really Job's crime, will appear with undeniable evidence, to them who will read the book upon this plan. Every word, from beginning to end, proves Job guilty of self-righteousness. At the very beginning of his trial, his wife charges him with it. "What," says she, "dost thou still retain thy integrity? Dost thou still maintain thine own righteousness even after God has punished thee so remarkably for maintaining it?" His three friends bring the same charge against him, and Job owns it. "Though God should slay me," says he, "yet will I maintain mine own ways before him. Though I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go. My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live. My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death; but not for any injustice in my hands, also my prayer is pure: for, God, thou knowest that I am not wicked." These are Job's own words, and higher claims to self-righteousness cannot be made. When his three friends could not convince him of his error, he was in danger of dying in his obstinacy, unless Elihu had appeared, who stated the case in so clear a light, that Job saw his crime, and abhorred himself for it, and repented in dust and ashes. Throughout the book of Job, then, this one plain lesson is inculcated, that no man by his own works can be justified. God was pleased to humble Job, in order to con-

vince him, and all mankind through him, that the best man upon earth stands in need of the Redeemer's merits to justify him. For this purpose Job was tried. His three friends charge him with maintaining that he was just and righteous in his own eyes, and endeavoured to convince him of sin, that they might thereby bring him to confession and to absolution. But as Job was not conscious to himself of having wilfully failed in any point of duty, he insisted upon his innocence, and with great confidence pleaded not guilty. His friends, supposing from what they found in their own lives, that no man could be so free from stains of this kind as Job really was, gave him quite over as a hypocrite, for pretending to such unexampled righteousness. But they never pressed the proper arguments, or urged the gospel terms of acceptance with God. In this point his friends failed; and thereupon the anger of Elihu was excited, who comes and varies the charge, and mends the indictment. He first blames the friends for putting the cause upon a wrong issue, and then, addressing himself to Job, he informs him, that supposing his plea of righteousness should be granted, and he had not committed any notorious sins, and had performed, as far as he was able, the several duties required of him, yet he could not be justified upon any thing he had done or could do. Because there was but one who could justify, and therefore the best man upon earth could not, without him, be justified. Elihu brings several arguments to prove his point, from the 32d to the 38th chapter, in which self-righteousness is fully confuted. It never had so complete an answer. I would recommend to you the careful perusal of these chapters, as the best preservative against the deistical opinions of the present age, and to help you to read them with more spiritual improvement, I will give you a short view of Elihu's reasoning.

He lays his charge against Job in these words, that he justified himself rather than God, that his righteousness was more than God's; it is in many translations "in the presence of God;" and all the English bibles, till king James's version was established, read "before God;" Job had presumption to justify himself before God. He had such an high opinion of his own excellency, that he thought himself perfect enough to bear the severest scrutiny, even by him who chargeth his angels with folly. He imagined he needed no repentance or atonement; and how much soever they who have been guilty of notorious breaches of the law may want imputed righteousness, yet he had enough of his own and he would undertake to justify the general conduct of his life, even before God himself. Elihu shows him the presumption of this undertaking from the universal depravity and corruption of the human nature, which comes into the world in a state of sin and guilt, from which no righteousness of ours can redeem us. We are all, by nature, children of wrath, subject to the justice and wrath of God, for by one man's rebellion, judgment came upon all to condemnation. Now it is not possible that any future good behaviour of ours can free us from this state; because, after sentence is passed upon us to condemnation, we are rebels convicted, and our attainder must be taken off, and we must be restored in blood before any action of ours will be allowed good and right in court: and no other power but his who put us under the attainder can reverse it. For to think that we can take off the sentence which God has past upon us, by our own merit, is more absurd than if an attainted rebel should think of taking off his sentence by an act of grace which he should pass himself, and proclaim in his own name. Elihu urges this truth against Job, and presses it with great vehemence. It was to be the foundation of all his following arguments, and therefore he takes pains to lay it secure; and when it was once laid and secured, what could Job or any self-righteous man object to it? For if it be granted that God hath shut up all under sin, which the scripture positively asserts, then we must remain shut up until the same almighty hand which shut us up, shall also set us at liberty; and if we attempt to set ourselves at liberty, without or against his will, we only make our confinement more close and wretched. God indeed offers us pardon and liberty, but then we must apply for them in the way he has appointed, and if we think of attaining them without the merits of Jesus Christ, which is his appointed way, we take the direct method of disowning ourselves of the offered pardon and liberty, and shut ourselves up the more closely under sin and condemnation.

That we who are by nature born in sin, and children of wrath, cannot do any thing to make ourselves be born again to righteousness and children of God, is the express doctrine of holy scripture, and our church maintains it in very clear terms in her 11th article; "we are accounted just and righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not for our own works and deservings, therefore whatever our works and deservings be, we must remain unjust and unrighteous, until we go with humility to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and be made just and righteous by his imputed merits." To bring us to this humble frame of mind is the chief design of all God's visitations: when we are like to be led astray by a fond opinion of our own sufficiency, then he suffers us to fall into afflictions, that we may find our own weakness, and be better disposed to accept of his offered grace. This is Elihu's second argument to Job, which he introduces in these words; "Surely thou hast spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me Behold God findeth occasion against me, he counteth me for his enemy;" and then reproving Job very sharply for these presumptuous expressions, he tells him the reason for God's sending men such visitations as he might withhold. It was, that he might withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man: when we begin to entertain too high an opinion of our own goodness, then God visits us with afflictions, in order to withdraw us from such self-righteous purposes. He sends outward evils to cure our inward evils, and he makes us sensible of our weakness and misery, that finding no help in the creature, he may force us to fly to him for help, and thereby he may hide pride from man. To hide pride from man is the hardest work of his grace: pride, it is so interwoven and incorporated with our corrupt hearts, that nothing less than an Almighty hand can take it out; after God has opened our eyes, and we see our sin and guilt by nature, and are convinced that Jesus Christ alone can deliver us from it, yet still some proud opinions of self will be often rising. This grand idol self, will be trying to get some adoration; and the best man, if he be not much upon his guard, is most exposed to, and will soonest fall into, self-idolatry. Therefore, God out of his infinite mercy to us, when he sees us likely to fall into this temptation, tries to hide pride from man by such visitations as he sent Job: he pulls down our inward lofty thoughts by outward humiliations, and sends us pains and diseases to humble the body, that the mind may thereby receive proper lessons of humility: with this gracious intent, he had visited Job in a very severe manner, but to no purpose: his bodily substance was reduced to skin and bone, but without success; still his proud spirit refused correction, he would not give up his self-righteousness; he was upon the brink of destruction, without being sensible of his sin and danger, and he would soon have fallen, if he had continued obstinate, into the pit of the grave, and into the pit of misery: in this dreadful extremity, Elihu directs him and all men in his circumstances, to the only person who is able to help in such a time of need, he directs him to the Lord our righteousness, who is almighty to save, and this is

Elihu's third argument, which he brings to illustrate and confirm the two former. For so soon as man is brought by means of affliction, to see his sin and misery, and, disclaiming all righteousness of his own, comes to Christ for righteousness and salvation, then is he made righteous and saved. Elihu has stated the manner of applying Christ's righteousness to the sinner, in as clear and express terms as the scripture has anywhere used; he says, chap. xxxiii. 22, 23, &c., that when God visits man with sickness, so that his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers, yet if there be a mediator with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness, then God is gracious unto him, and saith, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom;" here is the whole method of salvation from first to last.

Elihu says, that when we are in extreme danger, and within the very jaws of death, and everlasting destruction, yet in this desperate case, if we apply to the great Mediator, styled here, "one among a thousand," and he appear and intercede in our behalf, satisfying for our offences, out of the inexhaustible fund of his own uprightness; then God withdraws the uplifted hand of his vengeance, and

says to the executioners of his wrath, Save the man from perishing, for my justice is satisfied, and the sinner's soul is ransomed by the all-meritorious righteousness of Jesus Christ. To this person Elihu persuades Job to seek for righteousness; he exhorts him to depend no longer upon his own good works, but to seek the righteousness which is by faith; and if Job could make any objection to this doctrine, or had any thing to urge in his own defence, Elihu calls upon him to speak, and he would give him a patient hearing. Job was forward enough to reply to his three friends, but here he has no answer; he saw that Elihu had hit upon the very point wherein he was defective, and therefore convinced, in some measure, of his pride and obstinacy against God, he remains silent; upon which Elihu proceeds to a fourth argument in the 36th chapter, that is built upon the former: for if affliction brings us to an humble dependence upon God our Saviour, and his righteousness, then God, for the sake of Christ's righteousness, will take away the affliction, and will give us outward peace and prosperity. Elihu presses this point very earnestly until he enters upon the magnificent display of the divine power and wisdom in the works of the creation, which the Lord himself goes upon, from the 38th to the 42nd chapter.

Elihu had considered the arguments against self-righteousness from grace, the almighty Jehovah proceeds to consider the arguments from nature: it is the design of both to humble us, and to make us depend upon Christ for his righteousness. The comparison, drawn in the last chapters, between almighty power and human weakness, between the goodness of Divine Providence, and the little imitations of it in some few limited acts of human benevolence, between infinite wisdom so magnificently displayed in the natural world, and the poor effects of those abilities which the human understanding, in its greatest strength and glory, can boast of: is not this sufficient to level the most aspiring genius, and to lay man prostrate upon the dust from which he was formed, and to clothe him all over with humility? In this lowly posture and condition, he will naturally look up to God the Saviour for help, and will implore him who is almighty, to save him by his righteousness, to lift him up and exalt him. And in this lowly condition we find Job at the end of the history; all his lofty ideas brought down, stripped of all his self-righteousness, humbly suing to Jesus for mercy, he cries out, "Lord, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." And I hope the grace of God has now brought you into this temper of mind, so that you will hear me patiently, while I bring the doctrine hence to you, and apply it to your spiritual improvement and benefit. I can scarce persuade myself, after what has been said, that any of you will seek to save yourselves by your own righteousness; if you read the book of Job, you will not. It must, by the grace of God, cure you of all thoughts of justifying yourselves. But lest there should be some one person crept in among us, who holds righteousness upon the deistical plan, I would ask him this plain question, "Are you as perfect and upright as Job was? fearing God and fleeing from evil?" If he says he is not so perfect, then he condemns himself; but if he says he is as perfect, then the book of Job condemns him: for Job was put upon his trial, and was found guilty. I believe no man living is so upright as Job was in the outward duties, and yet at the bar of strict justice, he could not justify himself; and who art thou then, O vain man, who will venture to plead thy merits before God after that he who had a much stronger, better plea, has been tried and convicted of self-idolatry; with such a precedent before thine eyes, reading his condemnation upon record, how canst thou hope to escape? There is no way left to escape, thy ruin is inevitable, unless the God of love, whose righteousness thou opposest, open thine eyes to see thy sin and danger, and give thee grace to forsake them.

But there is a kind of self-righteousness which is maintained by persons called Christians, and which is as destructive of Christ's righteousness as the deistical opinion; many nominal Christians have a plan of good works, which they are to act by, and if they should happen now and then to fail, then they apply to Christ to make up this deficiency, and after the merit of their alms, and church-going, and praying, and attendance on sermons and sacraments, after their merit is all summed up, then they hope Christ will supply the defect. But this is popery; to place any merit in works, is downright popery. Not one protestant Christian

is of this opinion. Our own church, in her articles and homilies, declares expressly against the merit of works, and ascribes our justification to the free grace and merits of Jesus Christ received by faith, and not by works. But, methinks I hear the disputer of this world object, that by this doctrine we weaken the obligation to good works. When the same objection was made to St. Paul, he gave the same answer; "Do we make void the law by faith? God forbid." We establish the law; no man can keep the law as he ought but he who has faith; and whoever has faith must keep the law, because faith implants the living principle of love and obedience in the heart, and gives both the will and the power to keep the law of God, so that we do not make void the law by faith, but lay the proper foundation upon which it is to be established. All that the scripture says upon this point is not to overthrow good works, but to secure the observance of them. For although they cannot justify me in the sight of God, yet they are acceptable to him, when they come from a faithful heart, and are presented before him along with the sweet-smelling savour of the Redeemer's merits. Lest my meaning should be mistaken, I thought it proper to enter this caution, and I have only to remark that, upon the Christian's plan, self-righteousness is not defensible; Jesus Christ is the Lord our righteousness; we have none but what comes from him, and we rob him of so much as we ascribe to ourselves. Nothing is more injurious to him than pride, because it takes men off from that humble dependence upon God's righteousness, and tempts them into the scheme of self-righteousness, which is spiritual pride in the highest degree. It is even idolizing self, whoever thinks himself so righteous that he can claim his reward as a matter of debt, without the Redeemer's righteousness. He is a self-idolater, and the image-worshippers of ancient and modern Rome never fell into such gross idolatry; they always chose to fall down before something great and venerable, but the self-idolater pays his adoration to what was indeed the image of God, but is now made ugly by sin, and quite defaced by pride. And since this is so high an offence, and which the best men are most liable to fall into, we cannot, therefore, be too watchful over our hearts, to check and keep down every little rising of pride and self-sufficiency. Neither can we be too often or too earnestly imploring the assistance of divine grace to preserve us in a constant humble dependence upon Christ and his righteousness. We lie so open to the flattering temptations of pride and vanity, that we should leave no means untried which are likely to keep us humble in the ways of God's holy ordinances; we should be always seeking his help, and thereby humbling ourselves; and every act of humiliation, that tends to pull down our lofty ideas of ourselves, should be encouraged. Every Christian man ought to have his fixed times for private humiliation before God; all would find his interest in it. For God giveth grace to the humble, and every Christian man ought, as for himself, so also for the community in which he lives, to keep these fixed seasons of humiliation; and more especially at present, for the times are sore distempered. Our land mourns for the many creeping sins of it, and more for these election sins. There was not more vice and corruption at the election for magistrates in heathen Rome, than there is in this Christian country. What a deluge of drunkenness and debauchery has there been for many months past through the kingdom! and what a number of false oaths have been taken! How has the Lord's holy name been blasphemed by known perjuries! And what a trifling value do men begin to set upon their eternal salvation, when they will swear it away for the wages of iniquity! Certainly these men have never read what the Almighty says to them in Mal. iii. 5. "And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the false swearers." God will fulfil what he here threatens. He cannot lie; he will be a swift witness against perjurers, and he will bear his testimony against them by some great judgment, which is now hanging over their heads, and they may expect it daily. "For false swearing," says the prophet Jeremiah, "the land mourneth;" and our land has been long mourning and quaking for fear of the Almighty's vengeance. The earth seems to be more sensible of our danger than we are; for, besides all his other judgments wherewith he has visited us for many years, I find that he is again trying to awaken us by earthquakes. In the northern parts of England there have been

lately several very severe shocks, and the people there are in the same dread and consternation, as the guilty wretches were in when this city was visited with earthquakes.

Now God does not send these earthquakes in vain, he intends them for so many awakening calls to a national repentance; he shows by them that we are really ripe for destruction, and that he is preparing to destroy us in some very exemplary manner. Lord Jesus, have mercy upon this sinful land! We do deserve all the fury of thy almighty vengeance, but spare us, most gracious God and Saviour; let thy visitations humble us, and bring every one of us to such a due sense of his guilt and misery, that he may be able now to declare from his heart, "Lord God, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Endue us, blessed Jesus, with this humble and penitent spirit, that our iniquities may not be the ruin of this church and kingdom, but that we may be pardoned and saved through thine infinite righteousness; Oh! most mighty God and Saviour, who livest and reignest with the Father and the holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Almighty God, who showest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may avoid those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

SERMON III.

And Jesus said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.—Mark xvi. 15.

This charge was given by our Lord to his apostles; it contains his royal commission, in which he appoints them their work, and promises to be with them in the performance of it—"Lo, I am with you always," says he, "even to the end of the world."

He did not confine this charge to them or to the apostolic age; but he includes all his ministers, who have the same commission, the same work, and the promise of the same assistance, which the apostles had. It is their bounden duty, wherever they are sent, to preach the gospel to every creature. This is enjoined them by their Lord and Master, and he will not dispense with their neglect of it. This is their principal business, on which the salvation of the people committed to their care entirely depends; and it is the chief instrument in the hand of God of making their business successful. He owns his preached gospel, and sets his seal to it. To this day he makes it effectual for all saving purposes. It is still, and will be to the end of the world, the power of God unto salvation.

Since this is the nature of the gospel, men, brethren, and fathers, it behoves you to consider whether you believe its doctrines, and whether you enjoy its blessings. It is your duty to examine yourselves how you receive the good news. If the gospel be not to you the wisdom of God, and the power of God, on whom will you lay the blame? Will you arraign the Judge of all the earth? Weigh this matter well. The time draws near; it is but a very little while before we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. What plea will avail you there? The law cannot acquit you, you have broken it; and therefore upon the footing of the law you will be found guilty before God. No flesh shall be justified by the law, but every mouth shall be stopped.

Will you plead the mercy and grace of the gospel? You must plead it now, or it will not profit you then. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. A matter of infinite consequence to us all.

What stops the free course of the gospel? The world oppose it because it opposes them; it testifies of it that its pursuits are evil; it testifies against unawakened careless sinners, who know not their state; against infidels, an evil heart of unbelief; against legalists, who mix law and gospel. It comes with

comfort to distressed minds. Let their distress be what it will, the gospel has good news for them—a remedy for every disease.

But God hath not left himself without a witness. Many believe the gospel, embrace its doctrines, enjoy its blessings; it saves them from every misery for eternity; brings all good in time; all wants supplied; brings everlasting good, an everlasting gospel, true in eternity. Such will it be in all its promises that be enjoyed in their full accomplishment.

The word gospel signifies good news: this is its settled meaning. It brings good news from heaven, a message of good from the justly offended God, declaring his purposes of grace and mercy to his sinful creatures. The gospel is for them; it is not revealed for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners. To them is the word of this salvation sent; it comes after they have broken the holy law, and are liable to its threatened penalties; discovering how the law may be magnified and made infinitely honourable, and God may be eternally glorified in saving them from the punishment due to their sins. This is good news indeed, because they could not undo the sin committed—that is impossible; neither could they make any satisfaction for it: sorrow, tears, good resolutions, future amendment, are no reasons why the law should not take its course, and the convicts of the law suffer for their crimes. The law of God insists upon perfect and continual obedience; it has made no provision for mercy, nay it knows nothing of showing any mercy to transgressors, but in case of the least failure, its sanctions immediately take place, and under them the sinner is left without help and without hope. When he is thoroughly sensible of this, he would sink into black despair, and would go in the bitterness of his soul, mourning all the way to the grave, if the gospel did not discover to him the gracious method of saving sinners, consistent with the honour of the divine law and justice, and conducive to the fullest display of the divine perfections in their everlasting glory.

This is the true character of the gospel; it is a message of good news from God himself, revealing his grace and mercy to sinners. And since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, why is not the gospel alike welcome to all sinners? The reason is plain: the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. The gospel is a sovereign remedy, but none take it till they are sensible they want it. It relates the same good news to all, but convinced sinners only are willing to receive it. As soon as they see the excceding holiness of the law, and the exceeding sinfulness of breaking it, and feel their guilt, and have some foretaste of their punishment; then they begin to relish the gospel. And as they are enabled to mix faith with it, it becomes as suitable to their case as pardon to a condemned malefactor, and as delightful as ease is after long and racking pain, because it brings relief to their guilty consciences, and comfort to their afflicted hearts; and so far as it gains credit, it affords a present deliverance from every malady and misery of sin.

But from whence has the gospel this sovereign efficacy? What truth does it make manifest, by the belief of which sin, with all its sad consequences, may be done away? It reveals the great council of heaven concerning the incarnate Jehovah, and is from thence called the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—good news of a Saviour, whose name was to be called Wonderful—a Child born, and a Son given; and yet this Child, this Son, the everlasting Father, Jehovah manifest in the flesh, God and man in one Christ, Immanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us. This great design was formed in the councils of the Godhead from eternity; and all the divine works in nature and grace were to bring about this wonderful event, with its happy consequences, in earth and heaven. God manifest in the flesh affords the richest display of the glories of the ever-blessed Trinity. Herein is love—the love of the Father shines out in none of his gifts, as it does in the unspeakable gift of his co-equal Son. Behold, what manner of love the Son hath bestowed upon us—angels will admire, and the redeemed will adore for ever him, who humbled himself to be made man, and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, for the salvation of his people. Here is grace, as infinitely divine as its author, that the Lord, the Spirit, would act upon and influence the minds of sinners to believe in the Son of God, and through him to enjoy the love of the Father. These are the covenant offices of the eternal Three, and they altogether lead to, and centre in, the incarnation

of Jehovah; for in the Godhead there are three Persons of co-equal and co-eternal majesty, Father, Son, and Spirit. These Three, as we are taught by the Christian verity, entered into covenant for the manifestation of their divine perfections, and contrive to get an everlasting revenue of honour and praise to themselves in the way of saving sinners. The Son of God covenanted to become their surety to the Father, to take their flesh, and in their nature, and in their stead, to keep the law in his life, to suffer the penalties of it in his cross and passion, and thereby to work out for them a perfect righteousness, and to make a full atonement. And being God over all, blessed for ever, Jehovah himself, there was in his life and death all the virtue and sufficiency to save, which the Godhead could possibly communicate. His work of salvation far exceeds his work of creation. It is so absolutely and infinitely complete, that nothing can be added to it; yea, when all his other works, worthy as they are of their divine author, shall come to an end, then this greatest and best work of God shall receive fresh honour, and an innumerable company of his redeemed creatures shall enjoy its increasing glories for evermore.

The gospel then is the welcome message of good news to convinced sinners—the best news that ever came from heaven. It brings good tidings of great joy, that there is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord Jehovah, and that he has made full reconciliation for iniquity, and has brought in everlasting righteousness. The gospel invites them to come and to partake of its blessings freely; and when they are made to believe the report, the arm of the Lord being revealed unto them, then these happy fruits of the Holy Spirit are found and enjoyed, sweet peace enters into the conscience, and holy love is shed abroad in the heart—peace and love, which surpass all understanding: for blessed is the people, so saith a voice from heaven, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound of the gospel: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: in thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." Psalm lxxxix. 15, 16.

This is the lovely character of the gospel of God. And is this your idea of it? Consider, sirs, and examine closely. A mistake herein is of infinite consequence. If your sentiments be different from the standard of truth, you can neither know nor enjoy true happiness: for there is none to be found in earth or in heaven, but what the gospel brings. It is the only message of good news to sinners—a message from the Lord God—glad tidings of good to convinced sinners. The gospel reveals to them every thing that can bring relief to their guilty consciences, and joy to their afflicted hearts; it discovers to them a perfect deliverance from all sin and misery, by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and a clear title to all grace and to all glory, through the righteousness of the incarnate Jehovah. And when this is believed by the power of the Holy Ghost, then the gospel proves to be a reality—the message of good news is found to be true, and the good things heard of by report are received and enjoyed. The believer enters upon present possession of gospel blessings, as the sure earnest and happy foretaste of its eternal blessings.

Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that the gospel of the grace of God is not only a truth to be believed, but also a good to be enjoyed; and this is what our Lord charged his apostles to preach. Whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, his doctrine must be declared, and his gospel proclaimed. This is the indispensable duty of all the Lord's ministers. Woe be unto you, if you preach not the gospel. Whatever reception they meet with, still they must persist. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel. To preach is to proclaim it, after the manner of heralds, with authority, openly and plainly. However unlikely the means may seem to accomplish the greatest end, yet the means must be used. The gospel must be preached; because it is the instrument in the hand of God for carrying on the whole work of salvation. He has appointed it, and he works in it, and by it. The more weak and unfit it is of itself, the more does the excellency of the power of God therein appear. His glory is displayed by the wonderful effects which he brings about by the preached gospel: for it is said to be the ministration of the Spirit, by which the Holy Spirit is administered and acts. It is also the ministration of righteousness, by which the righteousness of God-Jesus is made known and believed in. By the word of God, his children are said to be born

again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible: and this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you. The gospel is made the means of their new life, and also of their growth in it, and therefore they are exhorted, as new-born babes, to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. These great things are spoken of it, and they are true. It is a matter of fact, that the gospel is effectual for all saving purposes. God makes his promise good to this very day—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,"—with ministers to assist them in preaching the gospel, and with their people to bless them in hearing it. He is with them both, that it may prosper in the thing whereto he sends it. He is with them, and always. He never leaves nor forsakes his servants, in any part of their work. He is with us at this time. His all-seeing eye is upon us. His wisdom is managing for the best. Oh that his saving power may be here manifest: for his presence gives life, and puts spirit into the gospel. What men speak to the outward ears, he sends with his divine efficacy to the heart; there producing what moral persuasion, and fine oratory, and close reasoning attempt in vain. The word spoken, when clothed with his power, becomes mighty to turn sinners from darkness to light. When the great Commander spake—"Let there be light," there was light: so is his word almighty in his spiritual kingdom. Whenever he commands the light to shine out of darkness, he speaks, and it is done; his power is always present to make his word effectual, and will be present with it to the end of the world. For these reasons the gospel must be preached, and why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should bring about the greatest effects by such an instrument? What! is any thing too hard for God? Or any means unfit which he pleases to make use of? He has appointed the gospel to be his great instrument in bringing sinners to himself—to this he has promised his blessing, and to nothing else. The means may appear unlikely to answer the end, but his presence in the means can do all things, and when he pleases to work by a single word, who can let him? Consider, sirs, this is no new thing with God! The creation was produced by a word: he spake, and it was made. View the beautiful order in which he carries on the works of nature; this is also the effect of a word. He commanded, and they stand fast. He upholdeth them by the word of his power; and by his word will he dissolve them. The great day is at hand, when the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, *i. e.* with a commanding voice, at which the whole creation shall pass away, and the place of it shall be found no more. You see God does all things with a word. And as man fell by not believing the word of God, is there not a manifest reason why he should be restored in the way of believing? By not believing the word of God, he sinned, by believing the word of God, he is saved. Who does not see a consistency and harmony in this way of our recovery—a perfect sameness in the divine manner of working? And who cannot discover how the glory of God, which is the end of all his works, is hereby entirely secured to himself? For what have ministers, or people, left to glory in? Whatever riches of gospel-grace God gives to his ministers, or communicates by their means, yet they have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of them. And whatever blessings the people receive by the preached gospel, they are all the free gifts of God, through Jesus Christ. That according as it is written, "He that glorieth, let him glory only in the Lord."

But it may be asked, has the gospel the same efficacy? Are the same means accompanied with the same success? They are. The command in the text is still in force: the promise to it is the same: the gospel is still mighty through God, and therefore ministers are required in the text to preach the gospel in all countries, and to all sorts of people—Go ye into

All the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Go into all lands, whether you find the natives Jews or Gentiles, civilized or savage, all having sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being in the same state of guilt and misery; proclaim to them the good news of gospel grace, and inform them of the divine remedy provided for their distress: fear neither for yourselves, nor for the success of your message—I will be present with you—I will make the gospel

welcome to as many as I have ordained unto eternal life—they shall believe it, and by believing, shall find it the power of God unto their salvation.

The apostles obeyed the command of their Lord, and went in person into all the world, into every country then inhabited, and there they preached the gospel. St. Paul asks, Have they not heard? Have not all people heard the preachers? He answers, yes, verily, they have; their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world. They went, like the sun, to communicate everywhere light and life, and comfort and fruitfulness; and the Lord was with them of a truth. Sinners did hear in all lands. Multitudes received repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Still the Lord's hand is not shortened. Whenever he calls and sends his ministers, he gives them the same charge as he did to the apostles, and the same promise. They are to preach the gospel to every creature, without distinction—to rich and poor—to magistrates and people—to men of letters—to the unlearned—to sinners of every age and sex;—they all stand in the same need of the gospel, and to every one of them is it to be made known. It matters not, what prejudices or what enmity they may have against it; the truth as it is in Jesus must be preached unto them; because it is God's ordinance to correct their errors, it is God's great instrument to save them from their guilt and misery, there being no other name under heaven given among men, whereby any one can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ.

The gospel then is to be preached everywhere, and to every creature, which makes it really good news; for the more extensive it is, certainly the more to be valued. It calls in general to sinners, and excepts none. It invites them to partake of a free salvation, and, what is better, of a full salvation.

Free for sinners as sinners—a free gift of free grace from first to last: it is not for any working or merit of theirs, but entirely through the obedience of the life, and through the atonement of the death of the Son of God, that any sinners are saved. The gospel calls them to come and trust in the finished work of God-Jesus, and to come just as they are, without any previous qualification or condition. Salvation being freely by grace through what the Saviour did and suffered, none are excluded, who come to him. It is an act of grace, without limitation and without exception. Any one who is made willing may take the benefit of it. A debtor for a thousand talents, has as free forgiveness as he who owed but one hundred pence: being made to confess they have nothing to pay, God as frankly forgives the one as the other. And

This renders the good news of the gospel still better. It proclaims a full, as well as a free salvation—a perfect deliverance from sin and misery—a perfect title to all good—for it is written, "whosoever believeth shall never perish, but shall have eternal life." All his debts shall be fully discharged—all his crimes so forgiven, that God will remember them no more—a good title shall be made out to the heavenly inheritance, and he shall enter upon present possession by faith, as the sure earnest of his eternal possession. Blessed, for ever blessed, is every creature who heareth and believeth the words of this gospel—he shall be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus.

But it may be said, why should the gospel be preached to every creature, since all do not receive it? It must be preached for that very reason. All who heard the apostles were not converted. God acts herein as a sovereign. He follows the unerring counsel of his own will. He publishes his laws, which are infinitely just and holy, and if his creatures will break them, he leaves them to the consequences of their transgression. So does the Parliament of this land. It would be a strange reason for not passing a good law, because it was foreseen some would break it and forfeit their lives. It becomes more necessary on that very account. In the same manner the great lawgiver acts. To some his gospel is a savour of death unto death; to others a savour of life unto life. The fault is not in the gospel, but in the hearers. It was exactly suitable to their case, and a perfect remedy for their distress, but they would not take it. Ye will not come unto me, says Christ, that ye may have life—ye reject your own mercies through an evil heart of unbelief, and therefore God will be glorified in letting the law take its course. Where his mercy is despised his justice will be honoured—and they shall perish from the presence of the Lord who knew not God, and obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON IV.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, verily my sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore, for it is holy unto you; every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from amongst his people.—Exodus xxxi. 12—14.

Ever since the fall, Christ was the way to the Father, and he was set forth even in the Old Testament, with equal clearness as in the New. Our church says, Article 7, "the Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for, both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind through Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man, wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign, that the old fathers did look only for transitory purposes;" and yet we hear of a strange notion prevailing in the Christian world, that believers, under the Old Testament dispensation, did not understand the person and work of Christ as well as we do. Whereas they had the same revelation, and the same Spirit to explain and to apply it; they had the same faith that we have, in the same Lord; the same hope in Jesus; the same love to him, and the same obedience to his will on the same motive; and there is no difference between us and them, but in this one single circumstance; they believed in Christ, who was to come, as we believe in Christ, who is come. Moses and all the prophets, with one mouth, testified of Christ: they foretold his sufferings, and the glory that should follow. They gave their witness in plain words, and in significant rites, instituted of God, to describe what Christ was to be, and to do. The Levitical priesthood was appointed to explain those rites, and to make them familiar by constant preaching. As many as were ordained unto eternal life heard and believed in the Lord Jesus. They were ready to give an answer to every one who asked them a reason of the hope that was in them. If any inquiring heathen had desired a believing Jew to open to him the meaning of the ceremonial law, he would have explained it as St. Paul has in his Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ being the substance of all the shadows. And if farther inquiry had been made, Why is it you are so strict about the sabbath day? Upon what authority do you keep it? And what advantages do you expect from it? He would have given as direct and plain an answer, as any man now living can. He would have said, that God created the world, and in six days formed it, and on the seventh he rested, and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that on it he had rested from all his works, which God created and made: and that rest was to show, that as God ceased from his works, so there was a time coming when we should cease from ours; so on this day we cease from bodily labour, that we might have happy rest, and converse with God by faith, as we hope to rest with him for evermore. If you ask, How does it appear that the believing Jews in the Old Testament should have as clear views of this matter as we have in the New, I would refer you only to two or three scriptures, and then open this matter, that we may see the obligation of keeping and sanctifying the Lord's day.

The first is the original institution; many people think it is part of the ceremonial law: Adam had nothing to do with the ceremonial law, but he had to do with this rest; for, if he had kept the sabbath, and rested in God as his supreme good, he would have entered into that rest by his perfect obedience, which (blessed be God) we enter into by faith in Jesus. It was a moral obligation; so when the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them, the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made; rested, that is, he ceased from creating and forming any thing more, and he blessed the seventh day; he made it the means of blessing to us, and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: he sanctified

it for man's sake, that there might be a token that there was a real sanctification in Adam, when he was first formed, and if he kept that image perfect, he should rest with a holy God for ever and ever: he blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that he had rested from all his works which God created; that day is the institution of the first sabbath, which did not last long, but the continuance of the sabbath was after the fall; for before the giving of the law, we find that Moses said of the manna, 'it must not be gathered this day, because it is the holy rest of the sabbath,' which they had kept from the time of the fall, till the time of their coming out of Egypt. Upon the coming out of Egypt, the day was changed; they had kept the day which we now keep for Sunday from the beginning; but upon their coming out of Egypt, it was changed for the day in which they came out, and there is not any truth can be made plainer from the scriptures, than this truth, that the original sabbath was changed at the children of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and that it continued so. Our Lord lay in the grave the Jewish, the original sabbath; and he rose on the original creation sabbath. The day that was kept from the beginning, has been the day of the Christian sabbath. It has been asked, Where is there any sufficient proof and authority that this is a command of the most high God, and an obligation upon all his creatures? I chose to speak upon this passage before me, because of two or three words in it, which are not in the fourth commandment. This is an obligation, because the Lord spake to Moses, saying, "Speak thou also to the children of Israel, and say, Verily, my sabbath shall ye keep." Verily—the Lord sets his asseveration before it; in one place it is "remember," and here it is "verily," this is the truth of God, that ye shall keep my sabbath holy. Why? Because it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that sanctifieth you. It is a sign—that is the word I would fix upon it. They did not keep the sabbath for its own sake; it was but a sign, it was a memorial, they were to remember something by it, and so you know we do not keep the day now merely to cease from work, but we keep it for a particular purpose. It is a sign of the rest which believers have now in Jesus by faith; and it is a sign of that rest which remaineth to the people of God, when we believe. If you had asked any Jew, or any Rabbi, What is your sabbath a sign of? Why, says he, it is a sign of God's resting chiefly; but, now he has altered the day since our coming out of Egypt, it is a sign that we rested from the Egyptian bondage. It is a sign that God has brought us out, and taken us to be his peculiar people. He will, upon our setting apart this day to celebrate his service, to sing his praises, and join in hearing his word; he will sanctify us by his Spirit through the means that he has appointed for the improvement of his day. Ye shall therefore keep the sabbath, for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death; and to gather sticks on the sabbath-day, once was punished with death. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death—What is defiling the sabbath? It is not entering into rest by believing, that is the greatest profanation of the sabbath; and then those who have not entered into the spiritual rest and found it in Jesus Christ, they exercise their trades, they can get on horseback and ride out of town; they can get out, if they cannot afford to ride on horseback or in a carriage; and those that spend their time here in the city, you may find them in alehouses drinking till they are drunk, and then sallying out to do mischief. It is leaving the true rest that is in Jesus Christ, and it is no matter how men spend their time; if they have not entered into this rest, they are profaning the sabbath if they are in a church; six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest holy to the Lord: whosoever doth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death: wherefore the children of Israel shall keep, shall observe the sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. Not only is the sabbath a sign of our resting in God's love to us in Jesus Christ, but it is a perpetual covenant. The sabbath cannot be repealed, and therefore the observance of it is a perpetual obligation, because it is part of a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever. When you and I enter into rest, and cease from our labours here, we shall have a long eternal sabbath with God in glory, through Jesus Christ. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for

ever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth: and on the seventh day he rested; he rested and was refreshed. Now I would affix this meaning to the sign, that it is a memorial of God's resting from his works; and that, when we are enabled to rest in Jesus Christ by faith, then we enter upon the spiritual sabbath in time, and shall enter upon the sabbath glory in eternity. How does it appear that this was the thing signified? There can be nothing to complete the subject but this single inquiry; and, therefore, that I may avoid all reasoning upon the subject, I will read to you the most beautiful comment of an infallible expositor, the apostle Paul, upon the fourth commandment, which is in the fourth of the Hebrews; I will just read over that part which belongs to my present subject, because it is impossible to say anything that will make it plainer than he does, namely, that the sabbath signifies ceasing from outward labour, that we may rest by faith in the love of God in Jesus Christ; and all that have entered into this rest, will want no arguments to stir them up to be frequent and constant in reading, hearing, praying, meditating, and every thing that belongs to spiritual comfort on the Lord's day. "Let us, therefore, fear," says the apostle Paul, "lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it; for unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them." There you see they had the gospel under the Old Testament dispensation, as well as we, (and I do not doubt but every believer understood it as well as any man upon earth) unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit. Why? because they did not mix faith with it. Now it is faith that lays hold of the word; faith fastens upon the truth of it; faith fixes so upon it, and so incorporates itself with it, as to make it a real substance; and rests upon God's faithfulness to make it good. Now that is the way that we should mix faith with the word. Well, but if they failed for want of faith, and did not enter into rest, how came you to enter? We who have believed do enter into rest,—we who have believed. There is all that I have to say in that one sentence. There is a rest. How do we enter into it? By believing—by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ simply, without looking into any thing else. You never enter into rest without looking into Jesus Christ, as all in all; they that would have their own works to stand in some service as to their justification, and their final acceptance; they that look to any thing but Christ, they will be cast upon a turbulent sea all their days: but a person that is enabled to look to Jesus as the one rest of his soul, and looks at his works, and sees that he has finished the work of the new creation, as perfectly as he has finished the works of the six days' creation, then that man enters into that sabbath which will never end. Well, but say you, when did the believers in the Old Testament enter into this? We, who have believed, do enter into rest, as he said; but I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest, that is, proving one thing by another, they did not enter in because of unbelief; therefore, says the apostle, we enter in by faith, although the works were finished from before the foundation of the world; every thing was finished and complete, and yet there is a rest they did not attain then; for he speaketh in a certain place on this wise, God rested the seventh day from all his works; and he says, if they shall enter into my rest. So they did not attain it by any outward act, but only by faith, seeing, therefore, it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they, to whom it was first preached, entered not in because of unbelief; that is the Jews, that perished in the wilderness. Then he limiteth a certain day, saying, in David to-day (after so long a time) to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; but, by believing, enter into the Lord's rest. Now this proves that this spiritual rest, which the scripture speaks of in the Psalms, that it was not entering into Canaan, it was not done by any outward thing for three thousand years; for it was that time from the creation to David; but it says, in the eighth verse, if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day; but David, though a hundred years after, entered into the promised land, speaks of a rest which the Jews had not then found. Oh, how clear is the scripture, when a man has got the plain meaning of it, and can take it up in his hand, and can say, this book, from the beginning to the end, is written of Christ, and all the

shadows and figures in the Old Testament have Christ for their substance; when he can compare scripture with scripture, he sees as plain as any truth can be made, that Jesus Christ is the one sun that shines upon and enlightens all the whole volume of revelation. There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God, which they had not in the promised land; which they had not even found in David's time. Well, where is this rest to be found? Why, here it is: "There is a sabbath, therefore," says he, *(Sabbatismos,)* "the keeping of the sabbath remaining still for the people of God, for he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as did God from his." How plain and full is this against all Arminianism, against all mixing with works and grace. How plain is it, that when a man comes to Christ, and enters into his spiritual rest, he has done with all his own working. He will work, but it will be not that he may be pardoned; not that he may be saved; not that he may be justified; not that he may be sanctified; not that he may obtain life; but he works to this purpose, in the way of duty; my faith is to be exercised, and then I am to rest in Jesus, and find sweet fellowship with the Father and the Son through it, all the days of my life: and I must cease from my own work as God did from his. "Well," says the apostle, "now, therefore, let us labour to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." It seems to be amazing, but if ever you was an awakened sinner, and seeking rest, you will find that it is the hardest thing in the world to believe in Christ: to find peace of conscience, without any remaining guilt; to find your heart happy, satisfied in Christ, and that with lips, and life, and time, and talents, you wish all your life to show forth his praises. You will find it is great labour, and none can help you to do this work but the Almighty God. You will ask, perhaps, now, what is remaining of the sign that the sabbath was? It is a sign of that spiritual rest into which believers enter, by receiving Christ through faith; and they enter into it in their consciences, and in their heart, and, as far as they believe, they are partakers now of that sabbath which remaineth for the people of God. Oh that the Lord would help me to enter into this rest. If you will read the Bible upon the plan I have been recommending to you, take it, and say, This book treats of Christ from the beginning to the end, and it points out a rest in him which we enter upon now in believing, which is an earnest and foretaste of everlasting rest. How shall I enter into this? The apostle meets with that objection. There is no way but by the word, and there is no way but to look up to the Spirit to accompany the word? The Spirit and the word together are the body and the soul of this book; for the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. There is the conclusion of the whole matter: the word is what the Holy Spirit makes use of to bring us into rest, and when this rest is preached freely, and set before a poor sinner with all its rich fulness, then the Spirit comes and satisfieth him that he is as free to take this rest as any sinner that ever entered upon it; it is as full for you as ever it was for any one; enter upon it by faith. You only keep yourself from rest by unbelief; enter upon it by faith, and you will find peace in your conscience; believing in the bleeding Lamb you will find holiness and happiness in your heart; looking to Jesus, and believing in him, you will go on your way rejoicing; looking unto Jesus, who is bound to keep you, and you will rest satisfied in the love of God, that he loves you from everlasting to everlasting. This is the sabbath. It is resting in Christ: and when you think of the profanation of it, how scandalously it has been abused in this Christian land, oh, how does this preach to you and me, that there are very few that enter into this spiritual rest. A man that has been brought into it by the word and by the Spirit of the living God, he cannot follow his trade of a Sunday if the laws would let him; he has better work to do, and his heart is deeply engaged in it; yea, he will take opportunities in week days; he sees people can take time for their pleasures and diversion; his pleasure and diversion is to meet his God. Oh, the sabbath is his delight: there, says he, I meet my Jesus, and have fellowship with him; there I have found the Father's love, and rested in it in my soul and

heart; there the Holy Spirit has preached to my conscience and heart. There is a sabbath, infinitely beyond what you now have, remaining to the people of God. By and by you shall cease from your works, as God did from his, and then you shall rest with him. Oh this is sabbath-day work; and, therefore, as one of the fathers said of it, we abstain from bodily labour on that day, not that we may be spiritually idle, but that we may be spiritually busy. To those who do six days' hard work, really speaking, after the manner of men, it is a sort of blessing to have a day of rest; but when we see how our business gets hold of our hearts, and how some people, not even on the sabbath day, can get rid of this; when we see how the things about us distract us, and hinder us from enjoying this rest; surely, sirs, you that have entered into it, you must look upon it as an infinite privilege that God has commanded and enjoined you to meet him on this day, and has promised, that he that blessed it will bless it to you; he that sanctified it will sanctify it to you; and you can say with me, the best day of your lives has been the time when you have met God in his ordinances on his own day.

I now come to what I have to offer on the subject concerning the Christian sabbath. It is the day that our blessed Saviour finished his work and entered into this rest. They that believe in a risen Saviour, they will enter into his rest, and when they have entered into it, they will maintain it too, unless (which may be the case with some of the children of God) they may sit under legal preaching: we have all exceeding strong legal inclinations, and if a man sits under legal preaching, he will be kept in bondage; he seeks for rest in himself instead of rest in Christ. Many of the children of God are kept down by their remaining corruptions, and cannot enter into this heavenly sabbath, and others, that want to get into it, will not go the Lord's way; they get in by a forbidden way, over the wall into the sheepfold, and want to come into this rest by being perfect in the flesh; which being as contrary to all revelation as light is to darkness, it is no wonder that that which is only another name for Antinomianism, (for perfection in the flesh is no other than Antinomianism;) it is no wonder they should not enter into rest, when they get into a fool's paradise, and say, they have no more sin in them than Christ; that they have nothing but the love of God burning in their hearts; and have had it so long—forty years. Oh what dreadful delusion is that. Men and brethren, have you ever entered into this Christian sabbath? Have you, by believing in Jesus Christ, found peace in your conscience? Have you found your hearts happy? And, as God rests in his love to his people, do you rest in God's love to you in Christ? And I am as certain as I am standing up in this place, that there is not a man or woman upon the face of this earth that exercises their trade (supposing it to be a lawful trade at other times) on a Sunday—they cannot exercise their trade on a Sunday, if they are partakers of this spiritual rest; they find so much disturbance, so many things to be continually damping their enjoyments of this spiritual rest in Jesus, that it is the joy of their souls when the Lord's day returns, that they have again an opportunity of kindling their hopes afresh, and drawing out the affections of their hearts in holy love to that holy Jesus, who finished the work of the new creation, when he rose from the dead, and who finished the work of the first creation on the six days. If you have really entered into this rest, and are now happy partakers of it; you know what I am speaking, perhaps, better than I can tell you, and you know that you have an ugly thing to fight against, and there are enemies enough; you need not go to forbidden things, you need not go to profane the sabbath, you know it is your duty, privilege, and happiness, to be found in those ways, where God will subdue your unbelief, and keep under your corruptions, and by that means, help you to enter into, and enjoy more of this spiritual sabbath.

You remember, perhaps, that there is a society met together here to-day, who have joined in agreeing to support the observance of the Lord's day outwardly, (it is God's Spirit only that can help us to keep it inwardly,) and the Lord has been pleased to prosper them hitherto. I remember, about twenty-five years ago, I began such a thing, and there was something done for a year or two; but then people grew tired and fell off, and it came to nothing. If you really have entered into rest, and you would enjoy it; if you would enjoy the blessing which you now have, I would call upon you for gratitude to that God, who by

believing has brought you into that Christian sabbath of rest, to lend them some of your assistance. If you have time, lend them that; if it does not suit you to lend them your time, lend them something out of your pocket, for they are at great expense; they often have very expensive prosecutions; and the design of our collection to-day is to help them in this: that, if you cannot help them with your advice, cannot give up your time to them, every one who would wish to see the Lord's day in this land restored to its primitive glory, and primitive use, all that you and I have to do with our money, is to lay a little out for this purpose. I am certain this is God's cause, and as such, recommend it to God's people: the Lord enable you to give what you can, and the Lord grant that it may be a tribute of a free-will offering.

When we look around, and see the very great profanation of this day, and how it began to spread as all infection does, one trade thought it lawful, and then another man thought it lawful, and so from one business it got to others, it was a very hard matter to know where to begin; but since I promised to recommend this charity to day, many people have come to me, and said, I hope you will recommend such a thing; what signifies putting down bakers and butchers, and such sort of people, when the greatest wickedness in this city is committed in alehouses? then another says, why don't you put down such and such things? This is but an infant society, and I am certain of this, that much good has been done. I used to go commonly twice or thrice a year through Fleet-market, and it was exactly the same on Sunday as on Saturday, perhaps not a single shop shut in the market, and every thing exposed publicly to sale. I went through yesterday se'nnight, and there was not a single shop open, nor did I see a single person anywhere loitering about the market. Surely, sirs, this is the beginning of a reformation, and certainly there is a spirit of reformation gone abroad; and when we see the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the preached gospel; when we see multitudes come to hear, and hear of the spread that is over the kingdom, of numbers of awakened ministers, who have great work in their several parishes, all over the land, I cannot help thinking, that God has not yet done with his people, but that he has still mercy in store for us; and all people that have received the blessing in their own heart wish success to the ministry to others; and because magistrates and others regard only outward things, that we may be outwardly reformed, that then God will bless us as a nation, and that the judgments that are hanging over us may be averted. I think the stopping of the profanation of the fourth commandment may have a great blessing backwards and forwards; backwards, for I suppose it stands in the decalogue that its influence may go to the commandments before, namely, believing in God, trusting in him, and serving him according to his mind and will, and keeping holy his blessed day. Now the keeping the sabbath, is the outward means of sanctifying this day, coming to join the congregation; who knows, but when God is passing by, he may meet with you? He will not meet with you at the alehouse, he will not meet with you riding out, he will not meet with you profaning the Lord's day; but if you come to hear when Christ is passing by, who can tell but God may meet with you? If the Lord's day is kept, there will be a face of decency in outward things, and if the Lord's day be profaned, away with the substance when the shadow is gone. I believe that the profanation of the Lord's day has been one great means of outward profaneness: people complain exceedingly of their children, how very undutiful they become; why how can it be otherwise, when the father and mother go out in a one horse chaise, or a post-chaise, if they are a little higher in life, and leave their children with their servants, to do what they will on the Lord's day? And so there are complaints everywhere how bad servants are; you cannot get a servant that will last with you, but as soon as they can better themselves, (as they call it) away they go to another service, and while they are with you, they are guilty of loitering, and every thing that is detestable among servants. How can it be otherwise, when masters and mistresses set bad examples: when they go into the country, perhaps they leave their servants to themselves and to their own wicked hearts, and every thing the devil can tempt them to. If your servants were on the Lord's day bringing your children to hear, and you made your ser-

vants hear; if you made them as outwardly decent as you could, bringing them to the foot of the cross to hear of Jesus Christ, this is the way in which they would be civilized; this is the way in which their hearts would be in some measure changed. It depends upon God's Spirit to convert them in reality. I look upon all complaints of the decay of morality as taking their rise from hence, that the Lord's day is scandalously profaned, and they that ought to set the example to do good, are the first that set the example to profanation. When there is a society formed like this, the shops are shut up, the masters, mistresses, and servants who have been kept at home to attend to the business have opportunity to wait upon the worship of God, so that it is now their own fault if they do not go to church. But I have heard it very often said, oh, if they would put down all shops, I should like it, but the people tell me that if I do not serve them on Sundays, they will not deal with me in the week, therefore if it was made general, I should rejoice in it, for I want an opportunity to meet God in his service on a Sunday. Here then I look upon the observance of the Lord's day to look both backwards to the commandments before, and forwards to the precepts of the second table, and believers know, and unbelievers should hear it, that by believing we enter into the spiritual sabbath, and by unbelieving you shut yourselves out of it now, and by unbelieving you shut yourselves out of the eternal sabbath hereafter.

It is not necessary for me to say any thing more in recommending the subject; therefore I must leave it now to God, and to his almighty grace: only let me beg one thing—There may be some here, perhaps, that can help us very little either with money or with time, but there is nobody here but can help us with prayer; pray for a blessing upon this society, and beg that God may restore his sabbaths to their former use. Let me beg of you all that have the spirit of prayer to make this petition, That God will check the profaneness and outward profanation of the Lord's day, both for his own glory and the benefit of society; that the growing generation, servants and children, and all that belong to us, may be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

I have only a word or two of advice to give to the society, and I give it as from the same fountain from which I have been speaking all along. My brethren, I entreat you, who are entered into this work, to examine your motives: there is but one true motive, and that is, are you really set out reformed yourself; an unreformed reformer is a contradiction. Have you entered into this spiritual rest? If you have, I will tell you some of the fruits that will attend your being a member. You see a man profane the Lord's day—try all you can to stop him by scripture and argument; do not you go to convict him first, that is not scriptural, nor will a blessing follow it; tell him his fault between you and him; tell him what laws are in force, and if he does not reform, you must certainly try what the laws will do—that is your way. And when you are going about thus, and stopping any thing on the Lord's day, I would ask you seriously, have you never gone to convict a man in your own spirit? But before you begin, look up to God for his grace, that what you are going to do you might do it with meekness and gentleness, with a zeal for the glory of God; and I pray you, if you have entered into this rest, and if you are living in it, take care that you walk very humbly, and the more good you do, you will not be puffed up with pride, and say, Here is a society that has done what all others have failed in; the Society for the Reformation of Manners was nothing like ours: oh, no, if you have entered into rest, the more you do, the more humble and the more thankful you will be: you will bless God that he should make use of such poor creatures as you for the noble purpose of magnifying his name. Pray do, sirs, examine with what spirit you go to convict people, how you set about it, and if you succeed, whether God gets the glory or no. Oh that the Lord may make you eminent yourselves for every good word and work; and, as you are set about this hard work, you must expect that people will say hard things of you. There is no reformation begun but what is against the grain, against the sense of the people, and especially when against their interest; therefore arm yourselves with the grace and power of God, whatever you go about, whatever you suffer (for you will suffer) the Lord grant that you may do all you do with humility. I have only to beg of God,

that as there is but a very little time left for some of you who are in this society, and very, very little time left for some of us to keep our sabbath below—oh that God may increase our faith! The Lord grant that we may every day live in keeping the sabbath, and only rest unto the Lord in our hearts; so that when death comes, we may fall asleep in the Lord, and enter upon that sabbath which remaineth for the people of God. You will live happy, you will die happy. You will be happy for ever and ever, who by believing this day, have entered into rest. Oh that God may bless it to your hearts, bless it to the society, bless it to all that are here present, that we may really and truly know what that spiritual rest is, which believers find in the bosom of God's love to his children!

AN EARNEST INVITATION TO THE FRIENDS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH,

TO JOIN

WITH SEVERAL OF THEIR BRETHREN, CLERGY AND LAITY, IN LONDON, IN SETTING APART ONE HOUR OF EVERY WEEK FOR PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION, DURING THE PRESENT TROUBLESOME TIMES.

Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.—Psalm l. 15.

PREFACE.

1. In the beginning of the last war, Providence seemed to take part with our enemies. We wanted unanimity in our public councils, and success in our public measures. One miscarriage followed another. Our national courage ceased to exert itself; and a general dejection of spirits ensued. At this time several clergymen of the established church agreed to meet at the throne of grace on the Lord's day. The subject of their joint prayers was to ask the blessing of God upon our public councils, our fleets, and our armies. They were soon joined by a great number of the laity in most parts of the kingdom. Afterwards, several praying societies were formed for the very same purpose in Germany, and especially in Hanover. In the spirit of prayer and supplication they humbled themselves before the Lord; they sought success at his hands; and he was gracious to their requests: he sent victory after victory, until our enemies were willing to be at peace, and then they gave him unfeigned thanks, and ascribed all the glory to his goodness and power.

2. The principles upon which they then acted were these:—They believed in the being of God, the Lord and Maker of all worlds. They acknowledged his providence over his works; for he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. His kingdom ruleth over all—every person and every thing; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?

3. They believed also, that in the course of his providence he acts by an infinitely wise rule, which he has made known to us in the holy scriptures. He is the Almighty Creator and sovereign Lord of mankind; and he has given them a law, which is holy, just, and good. Every tittle of it is not only for his glory, but also for their profit. He has secured obedience to it by promises and threatenings; neither of which can fail. His word cannot be broken, either to the obedient or disobedient. According to his revealed will, his love infallibly follows the one, and his justice the other.

4. This is true of societies, as well as of private persons. Sin is alike the

transgression of the law, and deserves, in many or in few, the threatened punishment; but, according to the number, it becomes more poisonous; because it spreads its infection by example. When the multitude agree to do evil, the restraint of shame is taken off. If the times should favour them through much luxury and great licentiousness, they harden one another in sin. Then general dissipation and false pleasure take possession of the heart. These hinder the mind from being cultivated with any profitable knowledge. The sound principles of religion become neglected, and as these grow out of fashion, immoral practices must prevail; the authority of God is cast off; his word, his sabbaths, his ordinances, are first disused; and then, by degrees, despised. Thus infidelity gets deeper root, and immorality, which is its natural fruit, becomes luxuriant. The restraint of the divine law being taken away, human laws lose their force upon the conscience; for when the fear of God is gone, there is no motive left sufficient to influence the heart or conduct: men will then venture to sin without any sense of danger, even of death itself. And when national sin is come to this height, God has declared in his word, and by the constant course of his providence has made it manifest, that he will interpose to maintain the honour of his law and government. When men have thus deeply corrupted themselves, he will remember their iniquity; he will visit their sins: "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

5. When God arises to vindicate his authority, he is never at a loss for means. All creatures are ready to execute his judgments, which are the more fearful, because, in his hands, irresistible. Among them war is one of the most severe and desolating: it is one of the sore visitations of God, as Ezek. xiv. 21, which does not come by chance, but by his command; and he sends it, Amos ix. 4, to plead his controversy. It is the just appointment of his providence to vindicate his broken law, and his despised government. It is his wise interposition, either to correct for those things, or to destroy. When it is the loving rod of correction, it humbles; it brings the sinner upon his knees; he repents, he turns from the error of his ways, and is reformed by the visitation. When it comes to punish, he gives warning before the blow; but the people sin on; they fear not the sword, nor him who sent it: then it vindicates the righteous quarrel of the Lord upon impenitent sinners. It strikes at every thing truly valuable—liberty, property, yea, life itself. This scourge is now sent, and felt; sent by the Divine Providence, and felt, yea sorely complained of, but not as it should be; not with submission to the justice of the visitation, but with murmuring; not with turning from sin, but with returning to it with more hardiness and greater greediness.

6. This was our situation when we entered upon the war in 1756. Considering ourselves as Christian ministers, we saw our duty, and what part it became us to act, as good citizens. We had read the promises of God made to those who at such times seek his help and implore his blessing. We had seen those promises fulfilled; we in earnest pursued the means of his own appointing; and we met with the desired end: he humbled us at his footstool; we asked pardon for our national departure from the living God; we implored his mercy through Christ; and he heard prayer, he answered prayer, and we glorified him.

7. The use of the same means is now again recommended (Dec. 1778); the same occasion calls for it; and we have the same encouragement. The promises and the examples in scripture warrant us to expect the same success. May the spirit of grace and supplication be poured out abundantly upon ministers and people, that multitudes may use the means, until God send us a blessed issue! yea, may he turn to us in mercy, and turn us as a people unto himself, with repentance and faith! The cloud may be dark which hangs over our heads; it may threaten a destroying storm; it may spread blacker, and look more dreadful; yet prayer can pierce through the cloud; the prayer of faith can gain admittance into his presence who has his way in the whirlwind, and who presides over the storm. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous was heard; the cloud was dispersed; and the face of the heavens again serene and peaceful. Oh for another army of such supplicants! What cannot they do, calling for, and trusting to, the help of the Almighty? This is our spiritual armour, and more useful than

the arm of flesh; nay, as many use the one as use the other. And, now the hosts are gone forth against the enemy, may we at home follow them and aid them with our prayers, never ceasing, until God restore peace to the earth, and good will between us and all our public enemies!

The following little tract was made very useful in all the former wars, from the year 1756, and has gone through a great number of editions. I have been called upon by some persons, on whose judgment I depend, to reprint it, in hopes the same blessing may attend it. How greatly is it to be wished that it may stir up thousands to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and to seek his help in this time of need. If we do it in earnest, we need not despair. The same means will bring about the same end. May we use the means, and pray on, till God shall hear and answer!

W. Romaine.

My Christian Brother.—God has declared that when a land sins against him by trespassing grievously, then he will stretch out his hand upon it, and visit it with his four sore judgments—the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, and the pestilence. These he sends to punish the land for its grievous trespasses. He has visited us with some of his sore judgments; and therefore our land has trespassed grievously. And if we continue to provoke him, and refuse to receive correction, he will continue these punishments; and it is to be feared, if we remain hardened and impenitent under them, he will at last give us over to the destroyer.

The present circumstances of our public affairs are exceedingly awful and alarming. Our danger is confessedly great. Our enemies are many and mighty, and our numerous sins are in their interest. Every sin helps them to destroy us; and God has been thus far on our enemies' side. He has been by them punishing our sins; and yet, with a strange infatuation, we sin on securely, as if we did not apprehend that continuance in sin would certainly cause the continuance of our calamities. And dreadful it is to see how ineffectual all the former judgments have been to reform us. Still our people refuse to deny themselves their diversions and their vices. And the season of the year is come when, without any reformation at home, we are going to send out our fleets and armies against our enemies abroad, vainly flattering ourselves with hopes of success, while our sins set God at defiance and make him continue to fight against us with his almighty power.

If, then, our people have not been reclaimed by past judgments, and consequently greater must be expected, what is to be done? What can true believers do, but use their interest with God in prayer? We have no other expedient left.

If our people will not plead with God for themselves, let us plead for them. Our encouragement is great; we have many sweet promises in scripture to rely upon. There is one in Solomon's prayer, which suits our case exactly, 2 Chron. vi. 24, 25: "And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall return and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication before thee in this house, then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sins of thy people." There never was an instance wherein God acted contrary to the method here mentioned. Whenever a people turned to him, and confessed their sins, he turned away from his fierce anger. If they called upon him in the day of trouble, he heard and answered. If they put their trust in him, he maintained their cause.

Several ministers of the established church, from the consideration of our danger, and seeing no remedy more effectual than prayer and supplication, have resolved to spend part of every Lord's day in this holy exercise. They have chosen this day, partly for the sake of the day itself, being a day sacred to religion, and because they wanted to have the joint prayers of those persons, who might be hindered on other days, but who were now entirely free from worldly avocations: and they have chosen to spend from eight to nine o'clock in the evening, because it is the time that could be best spared from the duties of the day, and because, after attending upon public worship, the mind would be better disposed for pri-

vate worship; prayer, and the word, and the sacraments, having put the soul into a proper frame to humble itself before God; first for its own sins, and then for the sins of the nation. We earnestly request our brethren of the established church, and all our fellow-christians, to join with us in this religious design. It is a seasonable and a pious request that we make: and we hope no person, who has the spirit of prayer, and who is a lover of the protestant religion, and of our establishment, will be prevented by any slothful or needless excuse from offering up his petitions along with ours at the appointed hour; but that all the faithful servants of God, in every part of the land, will be, at the same time, as one congregation, presenting their prayers before the throne of grace. Oh how much to be desired, how good and joyful a thing would it be, to see brethren thus praying together in unity! May God put it into the hearts both of ministers and people thus to pray in sweet agreement, at one time, and with one heart, until God hear and answer, and deliver this church and kingdom out of their dangers and troubles.

The first part of the duty which is incumbent upon us at this time consists in humbling ourselves before God, under a deep sense of those sins which have provoked him to send down so many heavy judgments upon our land, in confessing those sins with a godly sorrow, and in turning from them with a repentance not to be repented of. And that we may all be stirred up to a due discharge of this duty, we should be fully persuaded that our public calamities come from our sins. God is angry at nothing but sin. Every man therefore should look into his own heart, and see what great reason God has to be angry with him, and accordingly to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, that he may pardon him and exalt him in due time.

Let each of us, then, at the appointed hour, retire from the world, and in the presence and before the footstool of the sovereign Creator and Redeemer, examine what grounds and reasons we have for deep humiliation. And,

First, We have great reason to mourn and be afflicted before him for the sinfulness of our nature, which is the fruitful parent of all our actual sins. We have corrupted ourselves in every faculty of soul and body; and the sight and feeling of this corruption should give us the most humbling views of our sinful, lost, and helpless condition: for by this fault and corruption of nature every man, naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam, is not only far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, but also deserveth God's wrath and damnation. How can we believe ourselves to be thus conceived and born in sin—thus by nature the children of God's wrath—and not be deeply humbled? What can be matter of greater humiliation than to consider how low we are fallen, that we have lost original righteousness, have lost the image of God, have lost his love and favour and grace, and have lost all hope, as to any thing we can do, of his glory? Let us, then, begin with lamenting the sinfulness of our nature, which is the fountain of all sin. Let us beg of God to cleanse it by the blood of Jesus, and to renew us daily by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may put off the sinful nature, the old man with his deeds, and may put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Secondly, we have great reason to be humbled for the sinfulness of our lives. God requires nothing of us but what is for his glory and for our happiness. His law is holy, just, and good: but how often have we broken it in thought, word, and deed! how presumptuously, after so many solemn vows and resolutions, against the light of conscience, against the light of the gospel; ungratefully, after receiving numerous mercies; hardened in sin, after being visited with heavy judgments! Who amongst us is not deep in guilt in these respects? Let us look back upon our past lives, and remember wherein we have particularly offended. Let us recollect our sins of commission against God's holy law, and our sins of omission, with the aggravating circumstances attending them; and then, considering how injurious the least of these things was to the glory of God, let us be humbled to the very dust: for the scripture is clear and express, "that we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" we have robbed him of his glory. Now it is our duty, as Christians, to live to the glory of God, and

to have a single eye to his glory, even in the common affairs of life, when we eat or drink, or whatever we do. Have we, then, at all times, and in all things, had a single eye to God's glory? Oh! guilty, guilty, must we all plead to this charge; with shame and confusion of face must we confess that we have not spent all our lives to God's glory: seldom have we had an eye to it; and when we had, very rarely have we indeed promoted it. And, after we have thus taken an humbling view of our sinful nature, and of our sinful lives,

Thirdly, Let the consideration of our national wickedness humble us still lower before God. Christianity is the religion professed in this country. Ours is a reformed church. We are a free people. God continues to us the light of his gospel. We have his word and his ordinances, and all the blessings of the establishment. We are highly favoured above all the nations on the earth. Now, to whom much is given, of them men always require the more; and so does God. He requires more of the professors of Christianity than of the ignorant heathen. But do we make him more returns of love and obedience than they do? Look around the kingdom, and judge. You will find in several parts of this land as great ignorance of the life and power of Christianity as in the deserts of Africa. What distant corner of the kingdom has not heard the blaspheming tongue speaking treason against God our Saviour? And where is the happy village free from open and scandalous immoralities? Here is our condemnation, that light is come into the world, and shines among us, and yet we love darkness rather than light. This makes our sins exceeding sinful, that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, and yet they abound among us. To repeat these works by name would be tiresome; to aggravate them is impossible. Open your eyes, you see them covering our land like a deluge. Open your ears; you can scarce hear any thing but cursing, lying, and evil speaking. Go where you will, you meet with sin at noon-day. It has thrown off restraint, and is not afraid to appear without a mask. Yea, sins abominable to nature are heard of in our land; and there are too many men among us who refuse to believe that God ever rained down fire and brimstone from heaven, and miraculously destroyed certain horrible monsters of sin. Stop, and consider whether these things be so. If they be, have we not great reason for humiliation? Ought we not to be humbled for our national wickedness, and still more humbled for that, having so many means of reformation graciously vouchsafed to us, we not only continue wicked, but also are hardened, and thereby grow worse and worse.

While we are thus mourning for the wickedness of our people, let us never forget that we ourselves are part of the people, and that our sinfulness has made a large addition to the national guilt. Let us never lose sight of this consideration, lest we should find matter for censoriousness where we only want matter of humiliation. The sight of our sins, as part of the sins of the nation, will serve to keep us in a proper frame to profit from the

Fourth humbling circumstance we have to mention; namely, that God is now visiting us for our public sins. This is the scope and design of his present judgments: and shall we not be humbled under his almighty hand? He has shown himself offended at our sins, and has chastised us for them as a nation. Hereby he would teach us this useful lesson, that we should turn to him with a national repentance, if we hope to be pardoned and saved. If we now humble ourselves before him, his former chastisements will be turned into blessings: but if, after often being chastised, we refuse to glorify him by our humiliation, he will certainly be glorified in our destruction. If the rod of his mercy does not humble us, the scourge of his justice shall destroy us. Humbled we have not been by any of God's past judgments; therefore we have reason to fear greater: for if, being chastised for sin, we nevertheless will not leave it, what can we expect but to be cut off in our sins? This has been the constant method of God's providence in his dealings with private persons, as well as with public communities. Fearful is that sentence which is already gone out of the Lord's mouth. Oh that it may strike fear into every careless sinner who hears it! "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. xxix. 1. We have often been reproved; and yet we have hardened

our necks. What, then, should hinder sudden destruction from coming upon us, and that without remedy? Let this awful consideration stir us up to plead earnestly with God for the hardness of the people's hearts. Let us be deeply humbled for these obstinate sinners who refuse to be humbled for themselves; and let us beg of God to spare them. Spare thy people, O Lord! spare them, and give not thine heritage over to reproach.

Let us lay all these things together, and see whether there be not matter enough for the deepest humiliation. We are altogether sinful in nature, sinful in life, a country professing Christianity, and yet abounding with sin, and hardened in it at this very time, when God is chastising and punishing us for our sins. He has given us, during this unsuccessful war, some severe chastisements; but they have not brought us to a right sense of ourselves, and therefore we may expect they will be more severe. God has shown us plainly that he is not on our side, and we have felt his displeasure; but we are not humbled under it. Without humiliation, he will continue to fight against us: and what calamity is there so great, which we may not then justly apprehend? What success can we hope from our fleets and armies, if the Almighty go out against them? What is our security, as an island, if he put it into the hearts of our enemies, and if he come with them, to invade us? In this case, how exceedingly should we be alarmed to think that our sins may provoke God to join with our enemies and give them success. Every thing dear and valuable to Englishmen and Protestants would then be lost heathenism and slavery would get possession of our religion and liberties. While God threatens us with these calamities, he gives us time to pray against them. While they are at a distance, prayer is our weapon, and God seems now to put it into our hands. Oh that we may use it aright to his glory, and to the preservation of this church and kingdom!

My Christian brother, after you have weighed these things attentively, judge whether it be not a seasonable and a safe measure which we would persuade you to take. And you will take it, if you are indeed a friend to our present happy establishment in church and state. Your love for them will put you upon doing every thing that lays in your power to serve them: and here you have a fair opportunity, which, if you make use of it, cannot but do you service, and may be a blessing to them. Pray for them at the appointed hour. Determine, through God's assistance, that nothing shall hinder you from joining us. Break through all engagements, all hindrances, to meet the Lord's people at the throne of grace. And for your encouragement, remember that he who sitteth upon the throne is the God who heareth prayer, and who has invited you to call upon him in the day of trouble: "So will I hear thee," says he, "and thou shalt glorify me."

If it has pleased God to put it into the heart of any person who reads these few lines to make part of this praying congregation, and he is at a loss to know particularly what he should ask of God, let him first beg of the Father of mercies to give him the spirit of prayer and supplication, that he may offer up his petitions acceptably through Jesus Christ our Lord. And then let him request the grace of humiliation, that he may be truly and deeply affected with the four particulars before mentioned. Let him pray to God to give him still more humbling views of his sinful nature, and to bring to his remembrance his sinful life, with the sinfulness of his sins, that, seeing himself to be nothing but vile and sinful dust and ashes, he may be disposed to mourn for his own sins, and then for the crying sins of this guilty land, and for the hardness and impenitency of our people's hearts upon which the heavy judgments of God have as yet made no impression. And then let him implore mercy, first for himself, and afterwards for the nation, through the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. Earnestly let him plead with the Father, that for the sake of his dear Son he would give us grace to turn from our sins by true repentance, that iniquity may not be our ruin. And although the past judgments have not reclaimed us, yet let him pray the more fervently for the gift of the Holy Spirit, that his grace may be poured out abundantly upon us, to show us the error of our ways, and to revive the spirit and power of Christianity, that we may receive Christ Jesus the Lord as our Saviour, by the merits of whose most precious blood we may be saved from the guilt and punish-

ment of sin, and by whose almighty grace we may also be saved from the dominion of sin, that, being thus delivered by him from the hands of our enemies, we may serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

In these our requests, let us never forget to pray for the preservation of the protestant church, and all its members throughout Europe, and especially for the peace of our established church, and for all orders and degrees of its ministers, beseeching God to give them his grace and heavenly benediction, that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth his glory, and set forward the salvation of all men. And to the end there may never be wanting such persons in the church, let us pray for all seminaries of Christian education, especially for the two universities. May the Spirit of wisdom preside over them, and water them with the dew of his heavenly grace, that the youth educated in them may come forth to the work of the Lord, fitted with all proper graces as well as gifts! And, since the harvest is now great, may the Lord of the harvest send forth more of his own labourers!

May the God of love dispose us also to pray fervently for all the protestant dissenting congregations, which love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. May he shed that love abroad in all our souls which alone can effectually free us from party spirit: and may he thus reconcile our hearts to them, and theirs to us. Oh that we may see an end of those bitter disputes which have so long disturbed the peace and hindered the union of protestants; and may there be only this one holy contention between us, whether the ministers out of the establishment, or we in it, shall labour most for the glory of our common Lord, and for the salvation of those souls for whom he shed his blood!

And as the hearts of kings are in the hand of God, we must pray him to direct the heart of our gracious sovereign lord, King George, to do what will be for the glory of God, and for the good of his people, beseeching the Almighty to enrich him with every temporal and with every spiritual blessing, until he place upon his head a crown of eternal glory.

Let us also pray for the Queen, for the Prince of Wales, and for all the Royal Family, that God would endue them with his Holy Spirit, and enrich them with his heavenly grace; that he would prosper them with all happiness, and bring them to his everlasting kingdom.

And let us desire the Spirit of wisdom to direct both houses of parliament, all the king's counsellors, and judges, and all the magistrates throughout the kingdom, and to enable them faithfully to discharge the great trust reposed in them for the punishment of wickedness and vice, and for the maintenance of God's true religion and virtue.

Let us beg of God now to go forth with our fleets and armies, and to give them success against our enemies in this war, in which we are engaged. And let us pray him to bless our officers, and soldiers, and sailors, and to protect them in all dangers, and to cover their heads in the day of battle. And let us earnestly and heartily pray for their reformation, and also for a reformation at home, without which we cannot expect success from our arms abroad. May the Spirit of the living God work upon the hardened hearts of our people, and soften them by his grace, that they may see the error of their ways, and cry for mercy before it be too late; and may they find it through the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. Oh that there may be a general turning to the Lord; and may our eyes live to see it. *Amen.* So be it, Lord Jesus.

These short hints may be enlarged and improved, as time and occasion shall offer. My Christian brother, may the Spirit of the living God direct thee how to enlarge and to improve them. And after thou hast once begun, and hast spent some evenings of the Lord's day in this devout exercise, be upon thy guard lest thou shouldst be tempted to leave it off. Never be tired of such a good work. Pray for the Spirit of grace and supplication, and carry thy prayers into practice. The more thou prayest, the more will God make thee joyful in the exercise of prayer. Go on in his strength, and persevere. Hold on thy suit, and wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us. Be not weary of joining with us; and in God's due time thou hast his promise; "thou shalt reap, if thou faint

not." Lord, grant none of us, who set out well, may faint, until we who sow our prayers, and they who reap the fruit of them, may rejoice together here, in the peace and reformation of our land, and hereafter, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in eternal glory. *Amen.*

AN ALARM TO A CARELESS WORLD:

A DISCOURSE

OCCASIONED BY THE LATE EARTHQUAKES, PREACHED NOVEMBER 30, 1755, BEING THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT, AT ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.—Matt. xxv. 13.

PREFACE.

Dr. Sherlock, Bishop of London, in his letter concerning the late earthquakes, has these words:—"As to you, my brethren of the clergy, who share with me the care of the souls in these populous cities, let me exhort you (though I trust you want not to be exhorted) to awaken the people, to call them from the lethargy in which they have too long lived, and make them see their own danger. Speak to them, persuade them, as knowing the terrors of the Lord. Speak to their hearts and consciences with such plainness as becomes the ministers of the gospel: tell them in season and out of season, that unless they repent, they must perish. If the warnings we have had are a call to the people to repentance, remember they are still stronger calls on us to preach repentance, and to discharge the duty we owe to God and his church, and to the flock of Christ over whom we are placed. May this work of God prosper in our hands!" Amen, say I. This advice is worthy of a Christian bishop, and I wish all the clergy in England would follow it. I have endeavoured to follow it in this plain discourse, and although it was drawn up and printed in a hurry, yet it is seasonable and necessary. The design of it was to rouse careless sinners out of their lethargy, and the necessity of calling upon them is now evident. I waited, while the former editions were selling, to see how they would be affected with the desolation which God hath wrought in the earth. But they are not alarmed. They lay it not to heart, but go on secure in the ways of sin, as if no such dreadful providence could befal them. They fortify themselves in their security by several very absurd opinions, which only to mention is to confute.

It is one very prevailing opinion, that earthquakes are not common in this country. They are not. But the less common they are, the more should they alarm us when they come; for there is a providence over this country, and when He orders, our land shall shake and reel like a drunkard. He sent two earthquakes lately, to stir us up to repentance; and he who sent these can send a third, and London may share the fate of Lisbon.

It is another opinion, that earthquakes are the effects of second causes. Be it so. Then there is a first cause on whom they depend.

But the learned can give a philosophical account of them. What! such an account, I suppose, as they did of the earthquakes in the year 1750, by changing their names into airquakes, and then they were explained philosophically. It will not be so easy to account for the shaking of the land for several hundred miles, and of the sea for several thousands at once, which was the case in these last earthquakes. What natural cause will they assign equal to this effect?

There is another opinion, from which men promise themselves security, and

that is the great wickedness of the Portuguese. Doubtless they were sinners, but not above all the inhabitants of the earth. We rival them in immorality, and we exceed them in infidelity. They were cut off in judgment. We are spared in mercy. From their punishment if we take no warning, we shall be greater sinners than they could be: for if neither the goodness of God can soften our hardened hearts, nor his judgments terrify us, then we may fear, that when he draws the sword of justice, we, who would not cry for mercy at such a time as this, shall receive judgment without mercy.

Careless sinners may flatter themselves with notions of safety, but unless they leave their sins they cannot be safe. While the Almighty is their enemy, they can have no peace. May he open their eyes to see this truth practically, that they may find the necessity of being at peace with God. The way and means thereto is to sue for mercy through Jesus Christ by faith and repentance: but there is such a general and violent opposition to this method of reformation, that we have more to fear from the anger of God against this dreadful sin, than even from the trembling of the earth under us. May the prayers and humiliation of the righteous avert the judgments of God due to this and all the other crying sins of this kingdom.

Prepare to meet thy God.—Amos iv. 12.

The church calls upon us, by the present solemnity, to bring into our most serious thoughts the advent of our blessed Lord in the flesh, when he came to visit us in great humility. He appeared upon earth in the character of a meek, suffering, dying Saviour. But there is another advent not far off, when all flesh shall see him in the majesty of the Godhead. His first advent was in the lowest humiliation, his second advent will be in the highest exaltation. And we wait for that great day, when he will come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, hoping to be found, when he comes, watching and praying, that we may rise with him to the life immortal.

We do not pretend to know the precise time of his coming: for of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man; but the Judge himself has given us some signs and marks, by which we might be as certain, that he is nigh and standeth before the door, as that summer is nigh, when the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs. And whenever we see these scripture signs and marks, it is our office and duty, as faithful watchmen, to give you notice, that you may be ready, lest your Lord should come in a day when ye look not for him, and in a hour that ye are not aware of, and should cut you asunder, and appoint you your portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. On this account, the subject appointed by the church for this day falls in seasonably with these remarkable providences, which have been lately manifested in this and other countries. And I have therefore chosen a scripture proper to awaken your attention to the second advent of Christ. It is exceedingly awful and solemn. The very reading of it must make a deep impression upon every serious mind. "Prepare to meet thy God," the eternal and almighty God, who is coming in all his glory to judgment; and if the righteous scarcely be saved in that great day, where shall the wicked and the infidel appear? They will then have no excuse for their sins—self-condemned they will stand with guilt and horror before his tribunal, to hear their sentence of condemnation passed, which is never, never to be reversed. So that unless an eternity of pain and misery be the best thing we can work out in our short life, we should now think of making some provision for an eternity of happiness. We should now be preparing to meet our God. As we must meet him soon, it should be our whole business to get ready and to be prepared, that whenever he comes, we may enter in with him into the joy of our Lord. This is the instruction which I shall draw from the text, "Prepare to meet thy God."

First, We here learn that God our Saviour, who once came in great humility to visit us, is now preparing to meet us in judgment. And

Secondly, We should therefore be prepared to meet him. And

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to stir you up to the true gospel preparation, that whenever our Saviour comes, you may lift up your heads with joy, knowing that your redemption draweth nigh. And

May the ever blessed Spirit, from whom the preparation must come, assist us with his grace, that our meditation first upon our Saviour's preparing to meet us in judgment, may be the means of preparing us to meet him. "Prepare to meet thy God." The suffering Jesus was united to the eternal God, and so united, that as the reasonable soul and flesh are one man, so God and man are one Christ. At his first coming he visited us in great humility, and the Godhead was veiled under a covering of flesh, but at his second coming all flesh shall see that Jesus is God indeed. Every eye shall then behold the divine glory of the suffering Saviour, and they who once pierced him at his bitter passion, or since with their horrid blasphemies, shall then confess to their everlasting shame, that he is the almighty God of heaven and earth. On this account we should be prepared to meet him. At the time appointed he came to suffer for the sins of the world, and at the time appointed he will come to judgment. His second advent is as certain as his first. It was foretold in the Old Testament, and promised in the New, and the scriptures cannot be broken. God had revealed it in the clearest manner to the patriarchs, so that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of it, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." The father of the faithful knew that he was to come to execute judgment upon all, and speaks with confidence, "shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" And Job had the same holy confidence, when he made his supplication to his judge; and the solemnity of his coming to judgment, Solomon, being a prophet, foresaw, and has plainly described it in these words, "God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." And the judge himself has given us a very circumstantial description in three of the evangelists, of the process of the great day, and has called upon us again and again, to be always ready and prepared for it. His apostles argue from the certainty of our appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ, and frequently make use of these terrors of the Lord to persuade men to faith and repentance. And there is a very remarkable circumstance, which gives great weight to these authorities; when our Lord is describing the general judgment, he confirms his account with a promise, that he would come to judge the Jewish nation, before that generation should pass away. Accordingly he came; and there has not a tittle failed of what he foretold concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, or concerning the dispersion of the Jews over the face of the earth. It is then a matter of fact, that he has already acted as judge, and he will come to complete his office. It is not more certain that the sun will rise to-morrow, than that he who judged the Jewish nation, will soon come to judge the whole earth. His second advent is fixed and determined to the fulness of time, as well as the first was. He will come in his glorious majesty at the last day. And, in the mean time, he comes with many signal strokes of vengeance to awaken a careless, sleepy world. He visits the inhabitants of the earth with his judgments, that they may learn righteousness; and he has lately visited us with some of his heaviest judgments, and I hope many of you have been stirred up by them to prepare to meet your God. And it is high time we should be all prepared: for the marks and signs of his second advent are fulfilling daily. His coming cannot be far off. The day, indeed, and the hour, are not known; but if you compare the uncommon events, which our Lord says were to be the fore-runners of his coming to judgment, with what hath lately happened in the world, you must conclude, that the time is at hand. He foretells us, that there should then be wars, and rumours of wars: and are there not wars, and rumours of more wars? There were to be pestilences, and we have had the pestilence for more than ten years in this kingdom. There were to be great earthquakes in diverse

places, and there have been earthquakes lately in many parts of the world, and in a far greater number than they ever were in any other age. And these earthquakes were to be attended with fearful sights; and did not many fearful sights in the element attend the two last earthquakes we had in this city? But the worst sign of all is the present decay of religion among us: this renders the rest more terrible, and makes it to be feared, that as we are ripe for destruction, so we may soon expect to have our candlestick removed; "for when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth," says Christ. There will be so little, that he shall scarce find any. The true saving faith will be diminished from among the children of men; and it has for some time been banished out of the popish countries, and the reformed churches have lately fallen sadly from the faith, and have preserved very little more of Christianity than the mere name: and in our own church we have kept up the form of godliness, but we are so far from having the power, that we deny any person can have it, and the few who say they have it are treated as madmen and enthusiasts. These are some of the infallible signs of our Lord's second advent. From them we are assured that it is not at a great distance. When we behold the fig-tree and all the trees shooting forth, then we know that summer is near; and so likewise, when we see these things come to pass, we know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. It will not be long before the Son of man will come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; and because we are assured that he will come soon, and yet know not the day nor the hour, we should therefore be always waiting with watchfulness and prayer. Our Lord required us to be always in this devout frame of mind, when he closed the volume of revelation with these words, "Surely I come quickly;" surely, says the almighty Judge, I come quickly to judgment. To which the faithful reply, "Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus." Happy would it be for us all, if we were so well prepared to meet our God, that when we see the signs of his coming speedily, and hear him promise, surely I come quickly, then we might give our "Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus." And are you, then, my brethren, not only ready, but also praying, for his coming? Do you wait for it with faith, and are you looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ? If you are in this happy state, then you can cry out with joy, Lord, we believe the promises, and we see the signs of thy speedy coming, even so, come Lord Jesus. But if you are not in this happy state, then I proceed,

Secondly, To show that since Christ will soon come to judgment, you ought therefore to be prepared to meet your God. He will come in all the glory of the Godhead, attended with the multitude of the heavenly host, and before him shall be gathered all nations. Every one of us must appear before his tribunal. We must meet the almighty God in judgment, when he cometh to take vengeance of his adversaries: and ought we not to be prepared for this awful meeting? We cannot resist the Almighty, we cannot fly from his presence, we cannot conceal one secret thought from him; and is it not then our interest to make the almighty Judge our friend? "For what king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand; or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace." When the King of kings cometh against you, armed with his omnipotence, you can have no hopes of safety, but in desiring conditions of peace. Your only way is to submit, and to try to make him your friend. Then you will be safe. So soon as you have secured the friendship of the sovereign Judge, and are under the protection of his almighty power, then you are prepared to meet him in judgment; and, therefore, since this preparation is the principal business of life, we ought to labour to secure his friendship, as the means to it. And how then shall we make him our friend? Sin made him our enemy, and it is the guilt of sin in the conscience, which makes his coming to judgment terrible, and will make the eternal punishment of sin terrible indeed. Take away sin, and God is reconciled. Let the soul be cleansed from the pollution, and the conscience purged from the guilt, of sin, and there will no fear

remain of condemnation. The Judge will then be the Saviour, and we shall have no dread of his judgment, having already received the blessings of his salvation.

The gospel has proposed a plain method of bringing the mind into this happy state, and it is generally effected in the following manner. While the sinner lies secure in sin, he cannot be prepared to meet his God. He must be awakened. He must be deeply convinced of his guilt and danger, and under the sense of them, he must be humbled to the very dust. These are the first steps towards his preparation. The Holy Spirit has now opened his eyes, and he sees his lost, ruined condition. He beholds the God of nature at enmity with him, and all the powers of nature combined to destroy him, and if he be ever saved, it must be all free mercy: for in himself he is miserable and helpless, and therefore not daring to look up unto heaven, he smites upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Under these convictions he labours, which though painful for a time, yet being the door and entrance into salvation, are therefore a blessing, and the greater blessing, as they are the general way by which God brings sinners unto himself: for the deeper and more distressing these convictions of sin are, the greater necessity will the sinner find of mercy, and the more earnestly will he seek, until he obtain it. And he has the infallible promise of God to encourage his seeking, "blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." In God's own good time he begins to find his interest in this promise: he has faith given him to apply it to himself: he sees his interest in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, giving him all joy and peace in believing. And the sense of this pardoning love casteth out fear: for now as his faith grows, so does he with comfort know that Jesus Christ is his Saviour and his God: he finds daily proof of it in the change of his life and conversation, not walking now by sight, but by faith. His will is now become renewed, and he loves and delights to do the will of God in the inward man. He has grace and strength given him to run the way of his commandments, now his heart is set at liberty. Thus walking with God, his reconciled Father in Jesus, and trusting to his grace and strength, he will be found watching and praying, whenever his Lord comes, and will therefore be always ready and prepared to go forth to meet him.

In this method the Holy Spirit prepares us to meet our God: he first convinces us of our sinful state, in which we are at enmity with God, and are not prepared to meet him; and then he convinces us of our reconciliation with him, of which we have the witness of the word, together with the witness of the Spirit, bearing his testimony with our spirits, that we are the children of God, and we have the outward witness of our lives and conversations, which we are enabled by faith to direct according to the rule of God's commandments. And then we need not doubt of our interest in the almighty Judge: for he has washed us from our sins in his blood, and has clothed us with his all-perfect righteousness, and having thus saved us from our sins, we are thereby saved from the fear of judgment. And what have we then to fear? Our Saviour is our Judge—his omnipotence is our protection—he comes in all his glory to take us up with him into his heaven, and to make us partakers of his everlasting joys. Blessed and for ever blessed are they, who are thus prepared to meet their God.

And are you, then, my brethren, prepared in this manner? Have you secured the friendship of the Judge, so that whenever he comes you are ready to meet him? An eternity of happiness or misery depends on your preparation, and therefore I hope the vast importance of the subject will command your attention, while I am endeavouring, under the

Third and last head, to apply what has been said, as a motive to stir you up to be always prepared to meet your God. You have heard the character of the Judge. He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity—the Lord of Hosts is his name. He is the almighty Creator of all things visible and invisible—when he spake the word, they were made. He commanded, and they stood fast. His providence ruleth over them all, and he upholdeth them by the word of his power. And this eternal, infinite, and almighty God, hath appointed a day, wherein he will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,

taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Such is the glorious majesty of the Judge! And are you prepared to meet him? Have you no fear nor dread in your minds, if he should come this night? If you should this moment hear the loud trump of God calling the world to judgment, and should see the Lord of heaven and earth coming with thousands and ten thousands of angels and saints, how would it affect you? Consider whether you could stand the shock. Look into your hearts, and see if you be this moment in the very state in which you would wish to appear before Christ's tribunal. Put the question to yourselves, Suppose the Judge was to come this hour, am I prepared to meet my God? If you are prepared, you are happy. But if not, you are and will be miserable, unless you can be persuaded to seek an interest in the Judge. And this I will attempt, in the help of God, under two or three short remarks.

First, To them who do not believe the doctrine. These are deists and professed infidels, the open enemies of Jehovah and his Christ, who having denied him to be God, think they are out of the reach of his judgment. I hope there are not many of them here present. Some perhaps there may be; for I know they are terribly affrighted at the late earthquakes, and their leaders have no way to quiet their consciences, but to assure them that they are mere natural effects, produced by natural causes; as if it were less terrible to be destroyed by a natural cause, than to be destroyed by the God of nature. Poor little philosophers! in what a despicable light do they appear, who are forced to exclude a providence, in order to get rid of their fears? And so for safety, they take shelter in atheism; and let them talk ever so much of one supreme being, yet they are rank atheists; for their one supreme being is one supreme nothing. God has been pleased to reveal his essence and personality to us, and his revealed account of himself they deny, and consequently whatever they set up against him, be it a God in one person, or thirty thousand gods, it is all a mere imagination, a one supreme being without any existence. No wonder, they should live loose libertine lives, since they are without God in the world. And what can we do but pity and pray for these men, who have adopted this system of practical atheism? Oh that the eternal Spirit would open their eyes, and if they have but a glimpse of truth, they will see that Jesus is God. And if they will not confess him here before men, there is a day coming, when they shall confess that he is a God indeed. At the glory of his appearance, these bold blasphemers, who now ridicule his divinity, will then be calling to the mountains to fall on them, and to the hills to cover them. The majesty of God the almighty Judge will strike them with terror, and when they are called before his throne to give an account of the hard speeches which they had spoken against him, they will stand guilty and trembling, waiting for that righteous sentence, which will carry with it inexpressible misery, "Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh that these terrors of the Lord may sink deep into the heart of every unbeliever, who is now at open war with his Judge, while I am,

Secondly, Addressing myself to the careless sinners among you, who are, I fear, a great number. The generality of them who profess Christianity live to this world, and seldom think about the next. Their pleasures and diversions are the chief object of their pursuit, and money, and honour, and power, are sought after, that they may enjoy themselves the better. All worldly men are upon this scheme; and while they pursue it, they go on securely in their sins, and are careless about the concerns of eternity. Their hearts are engaged upon other matters than preparing to meet their God. Their attachment to the world is the greatest obstacle to their preparation; and therefore we are forbidden to "love the world, or the things of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And if the love of God be not in us, we cannot be prepared to meet him in judgment.

Consider this all ye who speak peace to your souls, while you indulge yourselves in sin. You believe that God will call you before his judgment-seat, and that if you live and die in your sins, you cannot escape the eternal punishment of them. You know not but the Judge may call you before him this night, and

you are not prepared, and yet you have no concern about it. You sin on with the judgment-seat of Christ before your eyes to which you may be brought before the next act of sin be finished. What can we think of this unaccountable conduct? Certainly men in their sober senses cannot act such an absurd part. It is against reason: for if these very men were setting out upon a journey of two or three hundred miles, they would make more preparation than they do for eternity. It is against self-interest: for who would take some present empty indulgences of sin, as an equivalent for eternal happiness? It is against all principles of good sense to prefer sin to holiness, and to choose hell before heaven. And it is destroying religion, whose sole business it is to prepare the soul to meet its God. And are any of you, my brethren, in this strange careless state? Do you act thus against reason and self-interest, against common sense and religion? You are guilty of all these inconsistencies, if the Judge should come in an hour, when ye look not for him. And he may come and find you unprepared as you are at present. You cannot promise yourselves an hour to prepare in. His judgments are now in the earth, and they are sent to rouse you out of your security. Oh that you would be awakened by them and see your danger. Do you not suppose, that the inhabitants of Lisbon thought themselves as safe as you may do at present? They had no apprehensions of an earthquake. They did not imagine that God was going to destroy them that morning. But you hear how they were surprised and overthrown with a great destruction. While they were speaking, peace, peace, unto themselves, they were called and hurried in a moment to judgment. One had set his heart upon getting a handsome fortune, and was just sitting down to cast up his accounts, and he was cut off that moment, and called to judgment, with a soul full of the love of money. Another, intent upon his pleasures, was feeding his imagination with a vile scene of indulgences, and his filthy soul was taken in the midst of this impurity, and brought before the all-pure and holy God. One with an oath in his mouth was calling for damnation upon his soul, and it came, while the words were in his mouth, and down he sunk into the pit of hell. Dreadful it is to think of the manner in which they were surprised and cut off in their sins. Suppose such a judgment should be sent to this city at the same time of the day, how would it overtake sinners both high and low? The great, tired with diversions of the preceding day, would be surprised in their sleep, and would awake in the eternal world, full of hatred to Jesus Christ, and his people, and his holy faith. What can they expect from the Judge? And the lower people would be up, but at the devil's work, going on careless in their sins, lying and cursing, and swearing, and blaspheming God, and snatched away with some horrid imprecation in their mouths. Why may not this happen to you, as well as to the inhabitants of Lisbon? Why may you not be thus cut off, and die in your sins, yea, in the very act of sin? You have more reason to fear it than they had: for your sins are greater than theirs. Think not that they were sinners above all the inhabitants of the earth, because they suffered such things. I tell you, nay; but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish. The same immoralities which reigned among them, reign also in this city; but the contempt of Jesus Christ and his religion, and the opposition now made to the progress of the gospel by every method but shedding of blood, from which God withholds the enemies' hands, these are crimes of a deeper guilt than the unhappy Portuguese had to answer for. The common people in those popish countries are kept in great ignorance, they have not the light of the gospel shining clearly among them, as you have, and therefore they were not guilty of that one damnable sin, which makes all your other sins so exceeding sinful. You sin against the fullest evidence; you reject the light of the gospel in your understandings, and you act against it in your lives: and you sin on, when you are invited to forsake your sins and live. God sends his ministers to plead with you, but their counsel you reject with contempt. The means of grace are before you, but you refuse to make use of them. You have the scriptures in your hands, and you may there read the danger of your careless way of life, but the scripture has no influence. If none of these motives can prevail, be assured, that your guilt will increase in proportion to the advantages you enjoy: and the more reason there was for your being prepared to meet your God, the heavier will the con-

demnation he, if he should come and find you unprepared. May you lay these things to heart, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, now resolve to prepare for the coming of our almighty God and Saviour.

And if you have any desire to be prepared, there is one motive which ought to have great weight with you, and it is taken from a matter of fact. There are, God be praised, many persons in this city, several I hope in this congregation, who have obtained the love and friendship of the supreme Judge. Look into their lives and examine them closely. See how they are affected with the report of these judgments which are now in the earth. You will find no dread or fear in their minds. They are not afraid of any evil tidings. The inward peace and joy, which arise from the sense of God's loving them in Christ Jesus, are not lessened by any outward calamity. They know that he who is the Lord of nature will make all things work together for their good, and therefore their heart is established and will not shrink, though the earth should quake from its very foundations, and the hills should be carried into the midst of the sea. If the whole course of nature should be disturbed, they have nothing to fear. God is their friend. They are kept by the arms of the Almighty, and if the heavens should pass away, and the earth, and all that is therein should be burnt up, yet still they are safe. In life and death they can stay their minds upon God in perfect peace. You cannot deny, that there are Christians in this safe and happy state: for God has promised it them, and we declare that God is faithful and true; and if you believe it, how does it affect you? Do you find no desire to be as safe and happy as they are? Does no wish arise in your hearts, that you might be under the protection of the almighty God, and that he would set you on high out of the reach of public calamity; so that whenever he comes to visit a sinful people laden with iniquity, and to be glorified in their destruction, then you may rejoice and be exceeding glad, knowing assuredly that your eternal redemption is at hand?

Lay all these considerations together, and may the Lord let you see the importance of them. God is preparing to meet you in judgment, and eternity depends on your being prepared to meet him. You have no time to lose. He may come this night. And you are not prepared. What would your condition be, if he should call you unprepared? Therefore as you love your souls apply to him this moment. Now go to the throne of grace for pardon, lest you should be called before the throne of glory unpardoned. Cry aloud for mercy. The judge may still be intreated. Oh plead with him then, and be importunate, until he become your friend. Remind him of his love to sinners. Urge his bloody sweat, his bitter cross and passion, his cruel mockings, buffetings, and scourgings, endured all for sinners. Plead these with him, and lay before him the torments and the shame of the cross, and the piercing of his hands and feet, which are the engravings of his love to sinners, and be assured that tender heart cannot want love for them, which bled to death for their salvation. Hold on this plea until you find him gracious, and are enahled to place your whole trust and confidence in the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. Then you will be safe. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. They shall be found in him at the great day, when he will become to them the author of eternal salvation. Knowing this by faith, they are prepared to meet their God.

I hope he has heard my prayers for you this day, and if it be his blessed will, has disposed you to seek an interest in the Judge of all the earth. He will come to judgment, and quickly. May the Holy Spirit prepare us all to meet him. Oh! if he should come this night, how would he find you? Are you all ready? Is every one of you fit to die? Have you all got your lamps trimmed, and ye yourselves prepared, that if there should be a great cry made at midnight, Behold the bridegroom cometh, ye may be ready, and enter in with him to the marriage? And if he should call you by an earthquake, or by any other judgment, have you so sure an interest in him, that sudden death would be welcome? Think what an awful thing it would be, if you were to enter upon the eternal world this night, where your state is to be unalterably fixed for ever. Oh what continual preparation should you be making for eternity. For if you die unprepared, all is lost. Hell and torments are your everlasting portion. And if you are not quite in love

with misery, now beg of God to show you your danger, and to deliver you from it. The door of mercy is still open, Oh that you may find an entrance, and press forward with an holy violence, until you receive grace to prepare you to meet your God. And let us all agree to look up to him for it, in that excellent form of prayer, which our church has appointed for this day.

"Almighty God, give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead, we may (be prepared to meet him, and may) rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*"

THE DUTY OF WATCHFULNESS ENFORCED:

IN

A DISCOURSE,

PREACHED DECEMBER 14, 1755, BEING THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT, AT ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST.

Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Luke xii. 37.

Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.—Matthew xxv. 13

THE church is still preparing our minds for the second advent of our blessed Lord. He is to come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead; and because we know that he certainly will come, and yet are uncertain about the precise time of his coming, we ought therefore to be always ready. And this temper of mind is recommended to us in the text, wherein the Judge himself requires us to watch, because we know neither the day nor the hour wherein he will come to judgment.

The words are part of the parable of the ten virgins, who set out to meet the bridegroom, and while he tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight he came unexpected, and the five wise virgins, who had kept the oil of grace burning bright in their lamps, were ready, and went in with him into the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterward came the five foolish virgins, who had been seeking to buy oil at a time when it should have been burning the brightest in their lamps, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Christ's inference from hence is, that we should be always watchful, because we know not when the bridegroom will come. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Be always prepared and ready to meet me, lest I should surprise you in your sins, and the door of mercy should be shut against you. Remember that I have the key of David; and if I open, no man shutteth; and if I shut, no man openeth. If I shut the door of mercy against you, it cannot be opened, but you will be delivered over to the tormentors, to dwell with them in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.

In the words, then, we have, first, A duty enjoined, which is watchfulness—watch therefore. And

Secondly, A particular reason to enforce it, because "ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

And while I am opening these particulars, I hope the Spirit of God will open your hearts to receive instruction from them. May he keep every vain and wandering thought out of your minds and make you watchful indeed, while I am recommending watchfulness.

First, From the authority of our Lord's command, watch therefore. I define watchfulness to be that ready and prepared temper of mind, with which the believer is always waiting for his being called out of this world. He watches, and is ready and prepared, because he knows that he shall be called soon. If no judgment should cut him off before he reach to the full age of man, yet he sees death approaching; and put it at the greatest distance, yet the eye of faith can bring it near: for what are threescore years and ten? Compared with eternity, they are but a mere point of time. All men know this truth, but the believer alone knows it practically. He has learnt the true value of this short life, and is assured that it cannot be long before he must enter into the eternal world. He is convinced of the vast importance of being ready and prepared for his great change, because death will fix his condition for ever and ever, either in happiness or misery; and therefore he resolves with holy Job, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come," (Job xiv. 14). He will wait all the days of his appointed time, lest death should surprise him. He knows that the sting of death is sin, and consequently he watches against sin, that whenever death comes, it may come unarmed of its sting, and therefore without any power to hurt or terrify. Sin is his most deadly enemy, because it stirred up all his other enemies against him; he is in arms and at open war against it—he is ever upon his guard—and he does not trust to his own strength, but he takes to himself the whole armour of God, that he may fight manfully against sin, and all the allies of sin. And being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, he goes on conquering and to conquer, watching, and praying, and fighting, until death come to put an end to the engagement, and to proclaim the glad tidings of everlasting peace.

No person can watch in this manner but the Christian, and I make it the principal part of the definition of watchfulness, that it is the readiness and preparation, wherewith the believer always waits for his being called out of this world. This watchfulness is to be found nowhere but among believers; because without the true living faith, it is impossible to watch. The unbeliever denies the matter of fact, upon which watchfulness is grounded. Christ's coming in the glory of the Godhead to judgment makes no part of his creed. And every sinner who admits the fact must fear and dread Christ's coming, and can have no motive to watch for it, until he believe, that the almighty Judge is his friend. When faith assures him of this, then he begins to lift up his eyes with joy, and to look for the coming of his Judge and Saviour. And this faith is wrought in all the children of God by the operation of the Holy Spirit, who gives them joy and peace in believing. He sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts, and thereby takes out the fear of death and judgment. Then watchfulness becomes pleasant. To be always ready and prepared to meet his God, is the happy frame and temper of mind which is formed in the believer by faith working by love. He believes, therefore he watches. His faith is operative, therefore it keeps him watchful. It is a faith working by love, therefore it makes him love to watch. He loves God, and finds a heaven of joy in loving him, and therefore he waits with a steadfast hope for the blessed time when he shall be filled with love. Oh what must it be to see and to love God in glory? when but a ray of divine love darted into the soul at present, brings with it such pure and spiritual delight, as makes all the joys of the world fade away into nothing, yea, even to become vanity itself. Therefore happy is he who watches—more happy the believer who loves to watch—but thrice happy is that faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

This is the true gospel watchfulness; it is made up of the active graces of faith and hope and love, which keep the Christian soldier always upon the alarm, lest his implacable enemies, who are ever waiting for his destruction, should surprise

him. And among what set of men shall we find this watchful spirit? Look around the world, and see who they are that are waiting for their Lord's coming with watchfulness and prayer. Alas! their number is very small. The generality of men professing Christianity, live careless and unconcerned about their salvation: and careless sinners do no more watch, than a man fast asleep can be said to be watchful. Carelessness is the very contrary temper to watching, and carelessness in sin is directly opposite to Christian watchfulness: for sin makes the soul as unfit to watch, as drunkenness does the body; and to be careless in sin lulls the soul fast asleep. And in this condition, the Judge, whenever he comes, surprises sinners. He finds them sunk down into the dead sleep of sin, when they should have been watching and praying against sin, and they do not even dream of his coming. As it was in the days before the flood, though the Lord's prophet admonished them of their danger, yet they went on eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the flood came and swept them all away: so shall it be when the Son of man cometh; he will find careless sinners in the same state, neither watching nor prepared. If you look at their particular vices, you will see how each indisposes them for watching. How can the glutton watch stupified with meat, and the drunkard intoxicated with drink? The one will be taken while he is dosing and sleeping under the load of an overcharged stomach, and the other while he is dead drunk, and their filthy souls and bodies will appear in this shocking condition before the all-pure God. The worldly-minded man, whatever worldly object his heart be set upon, cannot watch. Take heed of the cares of this life, says the Judge himself. We should take great heed, lest they should get too much room in our hearts, because the love of this present world is inconsistent with watching and preparing for the eternal world. The profane swearer can have no thoughts of watching. He defies God, and is so secure in his cursing and swearing, that he is not afraid to call for damnation. He prays all the day long, and earnestly too, that his poor soul may be damned. If God should hear his prayers, what will become of him? How can he escape, when the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to call ungodly sinners to an account for the hard sayings which they had spoken against him? The whoremonger and adulterer cannot watch. Their impure souls are enslaved to unholy and beastly lusts, which indispose them for watching. Whenever Christ comes, he will surprise them: for the immutable decree is gone out of his mouth—"Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge:" but they live secure in their sins, and have no concern about being called to judgment; therefore he will come in a day when they look not for him, and in a hour that they are not aware of. Surely you will not say that any of these men watch, unless it be for their own destruction. And as to the other lovers of pleasure, they are afraid of Christ's coming, and therefore it is impossible they should watch for it. The love of pleasure is the characteristic of this age. It is seen in nothing so much as in the madness with which men are running at this very time after public diversions. The playhouses are crowded. The opera house is full of the politest company. Balls and concerts increase every day. The effects of carding and gaming are felt every where. The spirit of pleasure is gone forth, and has seized all orders of men from the highest to the lowest. Now are any of these people watching? Are they waiting for Christ's coming, who are seeking to please themselves? And when he comes, will he delight to find his servants taken up with diversions, and their hearts set upon pursuing them? Certainly, this is not the spirit of Christian watchfulness, which he recommended and enjoined to all his disciples: for they cannot be prepared to enjoy happiness with him, while the love of diversion is the ruling passion of their souls: and it is certainly the ruling passion, when they are so absolutely fixed upon their pleasures that no divine visitation, no remarkable providence can move them. Though they see the finger of God visible in his judgments, yet they take no warning. Neither wars, nor pestilence, nor public calamity—no earthquake, however dreadful, even if it destroy cities, and lay waste kingdoms—no earthquake, be it such as never was before, since God made man upon the earth; for we have no account in history of the sea and the land shaking and trembling for thousands of miles at the

same time, as they did in the late earthquakes:—none of these divine visitations can awaken the lovers of pleasure from their spirit of slumber. God calls upon them by all these providences, but they hear him not. The more loudly he calls, the more do they harden their hearts, and sink the deeper into their pleasures; and the more loudly his ministers call, they fret and rage the more at these troublers of Israel. And if conscience at any time begin to grow uneasy, they fly for relief to the world and its amusements. The playhouse is the general place of refuge, where they go to quiet conscience, and to lull it asleep. This brings together that vast crowd, which daily frequents the playhouse, and which fills every part and corner of it from top and bottom. And yet these very persons, who would not go to a play, unless they knew it would be a full house, are very angry at a full church; nay, so very angry, that they will not come to church, if it be full; nay, so exceedingly angry, that I know some of them, who think the minister should be starved, and they will do what they can to starve him, who happens to have a crowded congregation. I mention this with great concern, because it shows by what spirit these men are actuated, who rejoice in a full playhouse, but fret and rage with malice at a full church. What spirit is this, that is pleased to see the devil's house crowded, and is vexed to see the house of God filled? Is the playhouse, then, a fitter place to watch in than the church? And are they in a proper posture of watchfulness, who are sitting and delighted to the soul to see a filthy play acted; and if they should be called out of the world in the midst of one of these lewd scenes, would their minds be in a proper temper to appear before God? Dreadful it is to think what their condition would be, who should come reeking hot out of the playhouse, with an imagination full of lewd ideas, and indulging and enjoying them, and in this detestable impurity to stand at God's tribunal. Whenever you go to the play, you do not know but this may happen; and if it should happen, you die in the very act of sin, and you are lost for ever. Consider this, and lay it to heart, all ye who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Be convinced that the way of pleasure is the very reverse of Christian watchfulness; and therefore unless you prefer time to eternity, now shake off the lethargy of sin, and begin to watch. Suppose Christ should come this night, and this city should be destroyed, as Lisbon was, by an earthquake, consider what the consequence would be, if you should be found unprepared. If you live in the open breach of God's commandments, if you are running greedily after pleasure, nay, if you are but careless and unconcerned about the state of your souls, you will not be found watching. The Judge has commanded you to watch, and this command is as much your duty as any of the ten commandments, nay more, because you keep them to no purpose, unless you keep them with a watchful spirit. If Christ should come, when you are not waiting for him with faith and love, he will find you neglecting his advice, and despising his admonitions, and cry ever so loud for mercy, "Lord, Lord, open to us," then it will be too late; the door of mercy will be shut for ever, and he will declare, "I never knew you." Where will be your portion, when heaven is shut against you? Where, but in everlasting burnings, in torments that know no intermission, no end! "Watch, therefore, because ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." And the reason here given for watchfulness, because we are uncertain of the precise time of Christ's coming, is the second particular to be considered.

You have heard, wherein the Christian watchfulness consists, and how opposite it is to carelessness in sin, because it watches against all sin, and the chief enemy that would make us unprepared for our Lord's coming. To be always watchful, is the believer's character. He watches against every thing that may indispose him for meeting his Lord with joy, against sin, against pleasure, particularly against the pleasures of sense, remembering the command of Christ, "Take heed unto yourselves, lest at any time your hearts should be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day should come upon you unawares." The believer takes heed not to fall into these sins; he sets faith and love to watch against them, and puts them upon watching with greater vigilance, lest that day should come upon him unawares. "Watch, therefore, because ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the

Son of man cometh." This motive works strongly upon the believer. He is certain that Christ will come, and being uncertain of the time, he knows not how soon it may be, and therefore he watches always. He considers himself as fixed upon a certain station, where he must stand upon guard and do his duty, until he be called off and relieved. While he is upon this post, he is to watch. If the sentinel leave his station, or fall asleep upon it, you know what punishment is his due. And will not a greater punishment be your due, whose eternity depends upon your watching? and yet you cannot watch one hour, no, not for the sake of eternal happiness. Your own conduct in civil affairs will rise up in judgment against your carelessness in your spiritual: for we are now apprehensive of an invasion from that faithless people whom God suffers to be a scourge to the rest of Europe, and our army is upon the coast watching their landing. Now, if all the sentinels should fall fast asleep, and the French should land unobserved and without opposition, I appeal to every honest Englishman, what shall be done to these traitors? If the court-martial should sentence every one of them to be shot, I suppose no lover of his country would think his punishment too severe? I am sure the believer would not, because he would think himself deserving of death, and knows that he cannot escape it, if he leave off watching. But he will not leave off, because he loves to watch. His heart and his affections go along with his duty. Love is active and vigilant. It will keep him awake; for he does not watch against an enemy, but waits for a friend. He watches to meet his beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has promised to come to judgment speedily, and has commanded his faithful servants to watch, and has spurred them on to greater vigilance, by assuring them that the day of judgment shall come as a snare, and as a thief in the night, upon all them that dwell in the world. And though it come unexpected, yet it shall not find the believer unprepared. The uncertainty of the time will not weaken his belief of the certainty of the fact, but will be a powerful motive to spur him on to be always watching and praying, that he may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that are to come to pass at the last day. And thus he fulfils Christ's direction, "Watch, therefore, for ye neither know the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Men and brethren, let me speak freely unto you concerning this scripture. It is of great and of eternal importance, and you ought to examine your hearts, and see how it operates in your lives. Are you, then, watching? And do you watch the more carefully, because ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh? Look around you, and consider your situation. You are upon the verge of eternity. The joys of heaven and the torments of hell are before you. And you are not sure of a day longer to provide for them. Time flies. Death approaches. Behold the Judge standeth before the door. The late extraordinary providences proclaim his near approach. By the mouths of these his harbingers and forerunners he speaks aloud, Surely I come quickly. In a moment you may meet him in judgment. And is all this nothing to you? Will it be the same thing to you whether you live in heaven or in hell for ever? Certainly eternal torment cannot be a desirable thing, and how then do you quiet your consciences, while you are in danger of it? If you are going on careless in your sins, you cannot escape it. How can the devil delude you so far, and give you stupifying opiates, that you either do not see how near you are to everlasting misery, or else do not fear it? Your case is almost desperate; may the eternal Spirit open your eyes to see it, before it be too late. God has commanded you to watch, you do not watch. He has required you to be always ready, you are not ready. He has threatened to come in a day when ye look not for him, and you go on careless in your sins, neglecting his threatenings. He is now alarming a careless world with his judgments, but they make no impression upon you. He has sent war and pestilence to arouse you out of your security, you are not alarmed. He has arisen to shake terribly the earth, you are not moved. He has come to take vengeance on a guilty race, and has punished them with a most exemplary destruction, but you are not affected. He has overthrown large and populous cities, which are now nothing but heaps of wide-extended ruin; all this makes no impression upon you. Although many thousands of their inhabitants

be buried under the ruins, yet you neither feel for yourselves, nor for your fellow-creatures, whom vengeance suffered not to live. Oh hardened, insensible sinners! your hearts are more obdurate than the nether millstone; for what could the almighty God do more to alarm you, than he has done? And yet how few of you are alarmed? This strange stupidity and hardness of your hearts will soon bring down some heavy calamity upon you: for if you still return to your sins, refusing to repent, although you see the arm of justice lifted up to destroy impenitent sinners, what can you expect but that it should fall next upon your guilty heads, and that you, who would not cry for mercy at such a time as this, shall receive judgment without mercy? And of this be ye assured, that the longer mercy withholds the blow, the heavier will it fall, when the long-suffering of God is wearied out, and his almighty justice comes to be glorified in your destruction. Oh that this may never happen, but that he may be glorified in your salvation! May he give you grace no longer to abuse his goodness and forbearance, but now to leave your sins, and while his judgments are in the earth to learn righteousness, that you may receive justification to life by the all-perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Happy will it be for you and me, if by any means I may prevail with you to flee from the wrath to come. God is now pleading with you. He calls aloud to you by various judgments to repent. And it is my heart's desire to second his call, and to be useful under him in stirring you up to repentance. I think the ministers of the gospel cannot be too earnest and importunate at such a time as this. When God is pleading powerfully with sinners, and yet we see them sleeping on in security, surely we should then cry aloud and spare not. The heavier the spirit of slumber is upon them, the more pains should we take to awaken them. And

It is indeed amazing to see how hardened and insensible mankind are under these remarkable providences, with which the world is now visited. None of these have moved them This strange stupidity is an evident sign of their total corruption, and is the forerunner of their total destruction. Mercies have been long tried, but in vain. Now the Almighty tries his terrors; and still in vain. Neither his mercies nor judgments can awaken them. They will not break off their favourite sins and pleasures; no, not when they see his glittering sword drawn, and cutting off many thousands at one stroke. They have not sense to apply it, and to ask themselves, Suppose the sword of the Almighty should be turned against me next, am not I as great a sinner as any of those who perished in the late earthquakes? What would become of me, if I should be cut off in a moment as they were? Alas! my body and soul would be miserable for ever and ever. My conscience is awake, and assures me that I cannot escape the wrath to come, unless I get my sins pardoned, and secure an interest in the Judge of all the earth. This I will seek night and day with prayers and tears until I find it. May the Lord Jesus put these good resolutions into the heart of every careless sinner, and may he give you grace to carry them into execution immediately; to which I shall encourage you under two or three short remarks, which I have to make on what has been said.

And first you have heard, that it is of the spirit of Christianity, to make believers watch for their Lord's coming; and it keeps them always watching, because they know not when he will come; and when the judgments of God are upon the earth, as they are remarkably at present, then it inspires them with stricter watchfulness. The greater the danger is, the more watchful are they. You hear what has been offered upon these heads; but being determined not to give up your sins, it does not affect you. You are as cold and lifeless as if I had been talking upon a subject in which you were no way concerned. Would to God there were none of you in this state! How many soever careless sinners might come here to-day, I wish not one of them was to go away without finding some uneasiness of conscience, and some true, and deep, and lasting conviction of sin. If any of you leave the church with as much carelessness as you come, how do you stupify yourselves, that no sense of danger can alarm you? Lord, what is man—yea, sinful man—that he should think himself safe, when the earth has been for many days quaking and trembling, and he knows not but in a

moment he may be swallowed up and called to judgment! How can you dream of safety at such a time as this? Perhaps you may dismiss your fears by promising them, that our country is not so subject to earthquakes as other places. When providence orders, no country can be free from them. We have had two earthquakes in this city, and though but a little while ago, yet they are now almost forgotten, and since we take no warning from them, he who sent these two can send a third, and London may share the fate of Lisbon. So that this motive by which you try to quiet your consciences should alarm them the more, because the less common earthquakes are in this country, the more certainly ought they to affect you, and yet you are not affected at all. But perhaps you think you need not be under any great apprehensions, because earthquakes are only natural effects produced by natural causes. Be it so. What security do you get by this? Has the God of nature no influence upon these natural causes? Supposing he had none, which is atheism to suppose, and a natural cause should destroy you and send you to hell, would this make your torments more supportable? If you could go and tell the poor sinners who perished at Lisbon, that it was not providence which destroyed them, but only a natural cause, what good news would this be to them? They are destroyed and lost for ever, and the cause of the earthquake is of no consequence to them? They are only concerned about the effects of it, and would now give thousands of worlds, if they had them, that they had been found watching. And so will you, if you take not warning from their destruction. They are lost, but you have still an offer of mercy. You may escape if you will look more into yourselves than into the causes of this earthquake. Look at the one thing needful for you. Repent. Get your sins pardoned. Make God your friend, and then you will be safe. Let little infidel philosophers say what they please, be ye assured, that providence orders and directs even what are called natural causes. And when you are reconciled to him, he will make them all work together for your good. What he sends for judgments to others will be mercies to you, and you will experience his love in every visitation, be it prosperous or adverse. Whoever has attained to the true spirit of Christian watchfulness is in this state, and to them who desire to attain it I will make my second remark.

I am now speaking to these persons who are alarmed at the signs of the times, and begin to be concerned about the salvation of their souls. You want to have your hearts established, that you may not be afraid of any evil tidings, but whenever your Lord comes, may be found watching. He that put this good desire into your minds, will place you secure upon the rock of ages, if you wait upon him. When you are once united to Jesus Christ by faith, you are then out of the reach of every calamity. Nothing can hurt you; for the guilt of sin, from whence all your danger comes, is taken out of the conscience. You know that your heavenly Father loves you in his beloved Son, and that he will keep you in the arms of his mercy in life, and death, and to eternity. Being assured of this, then, you can watch; you will love to be watching, and whenever your Lord comes you will be ready to enter in with him into his joys. This is Christian watchfulness. It is always prepared, always looking out for death and judgment, and therefore is never surprised. And in this happy state all believers live, and there is no happiness upon earth but this. All the rest is but a shadow of joy, and in the end proves vanity and vexation of spirit. The thought that they must die, gives a damp to the highest pleasures of careless sinners; but the thought that they may die in the midst of their enjoyments, turns their fancied pleasures into real pains. Nothing can make life sweet and happy, but a constant preparation for death. And since God has led you to seek this happiness in Jesus Christ, seek it in the right way, and you will assuredly find it. Go to the throne of grace with humility and prayer. Pray without ceasing. Be importunate. Knock at the door of mercy until it be opened. Hear and read the word of God. Frequent his table. Be found in all the ways of his ordinances, and he will be found of you. He will give you living faith working by divine love, and with these graces your hearts will be strengthened, and enabled to watch, until your Lord come. And to those who are in this happy state I make my third and last remark.

My Christian brethren, your Lord's command should be much in your thoughts at present, Be watchful. You find none of his commands grievous: for love has made them all pleasant, and to keep them with a watchful spirit is become your delight. Faith and hope enable you to look out for Christ's coming without any fear or dread, and love makes watching for it sweet and joyful. It is a pleasure to you to meditate upon his coming. You can reflect with joy upon that blessed day, when you shall see the dear object of your affections, shall behold him in all the glory of the Godhead, and shall be admitted into his presence, where is the fulness of everlasting joys. Oh! there is heaven in these reflections. The happiness you find in them disposes you earnestly to wish and pray for the great day of your Lord's appearing. And his repeated commands to you to watch for it, keep you watchful. It would be no surprise to you, if you were this moment to lift up your eyes, and to see the crucified Jesus coming in the clouds with power and great glory, to hear the loud trump of God calling you to judgment, and to behold the dead rising out of their graves, the earth in flames, and to feel yourselves caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Are not these hopes the joy of your hearts? I know they are. You long to meet your beloved Lord and Saviour. And are you all in this happy situation? Say. Have you such pure and perfect love for the Judge of all the earth, that you wish, and pray, and watch for his coming. Ask your consciences, as if I put the question to every one of you by name, is this your case? Every true believer can, without presumption, declare: Glory be to God, it is my happy situation; through grace I wait for the coming of my most blessed and adorable Saviour, and in his strength I now watch, and hope, whenever he comes, to be found watching. Oh that his good Spirit may bring every one of you into this watchful frame and temper of mind, and may he enable you all now to ask it of him in the prayer of faith; and I know of no words more suitable to the subject, or more truly pious, than these which our church has taught us to use on this day.

"O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messengers to prepare thy way before thee! Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries, may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world, we may (all be watching and praying, and may therefore) be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*"

THE SURE FOUNDATION.

TWO DISCOURSES,

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, APRIL 11, 1756, IN THE MORNING AT ST. MARY'S, AND IN THE AFTERNOON AT ST. PETER'S.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste.—Isaiah xxviii. 16.

SERMON I.

Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. iii. 11.

In every undertaking it is the principal point to lay and to secure a good foundation. In temporal concerns, all men see and acknowledge this truth, and are careful enough to act agreeably to it. The men of business, of pleasure, and

of ambition, have each their foundation to build upon, from whence they promise themselves success. The learned also have their data and first principles, in every art and science, which are laid down as a sure foundation, whereon the art or science may be built. The Christian, in like manner, has his foundation. Divinity has its first principles, with this manifest advantage above the arts and sciences, that God hath built it, and upon one plain simple truth, which is clearly ascertained both in the Old Testament and the New. Jesus Christ being proposed in both as the only foundation of faith and obedience. This one sure foundation is laid, and no other can be laid: "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." What words can be more clear and decisive than these are? and yet the mistakes of men about them are endless, even of men who allow the divine authority of this very passage! The Papists have multiplied the one foundation into a great number, building upon the Virgin Mary as much as they do upon the ever-blessed God her Saviour, and upon a multitude of fabulous saints. And the Arians and Socinians, the pests of this age, have been trying to dig up the foundation, and would willingly leave no traces of it remaining. And some of the reformed churches, which set out well at first, laying Christ, and Christ alone, for the foundation, have since built upon him wood, hay, stubble, and such like reprobate stuff, which, when it comes to be tried in the fire, will be burnt. And the generality of men have no foundation at all, but live careless and unconcerned about the state of their souls, never examining whether they are built upon Jesus Christ the Rock of Ages, on whom the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. Each of these mistakes has at present numerous advocates, some of them have great interest, and others have enjoyed a long establishment, and the espousers of each have something specious to offer in its defence, which being dressed up with the ornaments of false learning, and falling in with our own corrupt inclinations, is very apt to seduce us from the foundation of truth. For these reasons it will be proper and seasonable to look to the foundation, and to see whether we stand secure upon it. In this enquiry the words of the text will be useful; they are so plain and clear, as to leave no doubt in every honest, teachable mind, which is willing to be determined by the authority of the written word, and hears and reads it under the guidance of its all-wise inspirer. St. Paul is here reproving his Corinthians for the envying, and strife, and divisions, which were among them. He had converted them to the faith, and Apollos had built them up in it, and they had great reason to join together in giving praise and glory to God, who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. But the common enemy of their souls prevented this desirable effect, by sowing discord among them. He tempted them into a party spirit, and they divided about the gifts and talents of their ministers. One said that he was of Paul, another that he was of Apollos; and they forgot, that neither is Paul that planteth any thing, neither Apollos that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. All the glory of planting and watering, as well as of the increase, is God's. For we, says the apostle, are only labourers together with God. Although, by our ministry the good seed was sown in your hearts, yet ye are God's husbandry. Although by our preaching ye were built up in your most holy faith, yet ye are God's building. We could do nothing without his grace: for according to the grace of God, which is given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation. This wise master builder laid the foundation, when he converted them to Christianity, and he cautions every minister of the gospel to take heed how he buildeth thereon, because there was but one foundation on which all doctrines and duties rested—"for other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid." The foundation is the entire groundwork of religion, upon which every part of it must rest. The whole building is to stand upon it, and therefore it should be laid secure. Certainly that cannot be too strong and firm, which is to support our present and our eternal happiness. Look at this tempestuous world, and behold what rains descend, what floods come, what winds blow, and beat upon our weak tabernacle, threatening its fall; how can we stand against these mighty assaults, unless we be founded upon a rock? For our comfort God hath laid a foundation, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, and therefore we need not doubt

of its stability or duration. He laid it first in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things and sure, when he purposed, before all worlds, to bring many sons unto glory through Jesus Christ. He afterwards revealed his purpose in the written word, and he hath therein laid but one foundation, and there is no other. Moses and the prophets have laid no other foundation in the Old Testament than what is established throughout the New, which is Jesus Christ, on whom we may safely build all our hopes of salvation, because he is God and man united in one Christ, who came as our representative, to act and suffer for us, and thereby to restore us to the happy estate which we had forfeited by the fall. As man he obeyed the divine law to atone for our disobedience, as man he suffered what we should have suffered for disobeying; but then his obedience and sufferings could never have wrought out perfect righteousness for a guilty race, unless the holy, suffering Jesus had been united to the most high God, and God-and man had been as intimately united in one Christ, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man. The merit of all that he did and suffered, rests upon his being a divine as well as a human person. Take away his eternal, self-existent Godhead, and you sink him down into a mere creature: and then place him ever so high, suppose him to be at the very top of the scale of creatures, yet you make him finite; and being so, clothe him with every grace and perfection short of divine, he could save no person but himself, for it is an adjudged case upon record, that no man can redeem his brother, or pay to God a ransom for him.

The divinity, then, of Jesus Christ is the foundation on which the whole of our salvation rests: for there is salvation in none other; and if he be not true and very God, there is no salvation in him. Our preaching is vain, and your faith in him is also vain. We are all yet in our sins, for nothing short of divine and infinite can save us from the guilt and power of them. But the scripture has clearly revealed his divine and infinite nature. It has not left us in doubt concerning the power of the Son of man to forgive sins. The Saviour of sinners was Jehovah, a person of the self-existent essence; for we are taught by the Christian verity to believe, that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons of equal glory and co-eternal majesty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who were pleased to display their attributes and perfections, by sustaining distinct offices in the economy of man's redemption, to whom we therefore owe equal glory and worship, because their love to us in sustaining these offices for our recovery was equal. God the Father was glorified by having honour paid to his holiness and justice. He demanded full and perfect satisfaction for sin, which God the Son paid by taking upon him the human nature, and therein obeying and suffering for sinners: for which stupendous act of love and condescension, he was seated upon the throne, and had all power in heaven and earth committed to him, and he is now glorified by all the heavenly host, angels and archangels, and by the spirits of just men made perfect, thousands, thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, a great multitude whom no man can number. Glory be to his holy name, for that his courts will be filled with such an innumerable company, ascribing salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. And God the Holy Ghost is glorified for abiding with us, even unto the end of the world, to carry on the work of salvation, for awakening the dead in sin, enlightening them with the light of life, and guiding them in their Christian course by his grace, until he bring them unto glory. Thus God the Father demands satisfaction—God the Son pays it—God the Holy Ghost applies it; but still in these offices the glory is equal, because the persons are equal. If the Son was not equal to the Father, how could he pay him an infinite satisfaction? If the Holy Ghost was not equal to the Father and the Son, how could he sustain his office, which requires an all-wise, all-present, and almighty Spirit? These distinct offices make no difference or inequality between the persons, as it is well expressed in that form of sound words to which we have all subscribed, "In the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another, but the whole three persons are co-eternal together and co-equal." Jesus Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and being a truly divine as well as an human person united in one Saviour, in this character every thing he did and suffered for us must be perfect

and complete. Nothing can be wanting to make him a sure foundation. When he obeyed—when he suffered—when he died—he was paying the satisfaction demanded by the justice of the Father, who demonstrated his acceptance of it by raising the manhood from the dead. And then the foundation of God was established immovably. God himself, even God manifested in the flesh, is the foundation that standeth sure. It is neither the Blessed Virgin, nor the saints and martyrs; it is neither repentance nor good works: neither morality nor natural light, but the one foundation is the God-man, Christ Jesus. As God, he is almighty: for he created all things, and he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. As God manifested in the flesh, he has engaged to use his almighty power for our salvation. In his obedience and sufferings, death and resurrection, he laid a foundation that can never be shaken, upon which sinners may safely build their hopes of pardon and forgiveness, of righteousness and holiness, of heaven, and eternal glory. And they may build on him with greater safety, because the scripture throughout sets him forth as the only foundation. He is laid, and other foundation, the apostle says, can no man lay. There is an utter impossibility of laying any other: because to attempt it, would be opposing the immutable decree of heaven, by which this one foundation was laid in the covenant of grace; it would be opposing God's revealed will, which has established this one foundation in the written word; and it would be opposing the sufficiency of Christ's obedience and sufferings, by which alone we can obtain acceptance with God the Father. Will not these men be found fighting against God, and how then can they succeed, who oppose his covenant, confirmed by his revealed will, and established by his miraculous works? So long as this scripture stands upon record, it will overthrow all their attempts to lay any other foundation. Will the metaphysician think of laying his reason and the light of nature? It is written, Jesus Christ is the foundation, and there is no other. Will the moralist think of laying a system of ethics, and the religion of nature? Jesus Christ is the foundation, and there is no other. Will the Arian, Socinian, and other infidels think of being justified with out the merits of the God-man? Jesus Christ is the foundation, and there is no other. In short every doctrine and duty stands established upon him. He is the foundation of all: "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The scope and design of the words thus in part opened and explained, offer to our consideration the following truths:

First, Jesus Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge.

Secondly, he is the foundation of all acceptance with God the Father.

Thirdly, he is the foundation of all holy obedience. And,

Fourthly, he is the foundation of all present and eternal happiness. And may the spirit of the Lord Jesus direct our hearts to make a right use of this scripture under the first particular, which was to prove, that he is the foundation of all saving knowledge.

By saving knowledge, I understand all the knowledge which respects the salvation of sinners. And man, in his fallen state, neither has any of this knowledge, nor can he attain it by any means in his own power. His reasoning faculties, in their highest refinement, could never have discovered to him, how he might be pardoned; for when sin cut him off from all communion with the Father of spirits, who is to the soul what the sun is to the body, it then deprived him of all spiritual discernment, and without the light of revelation he is unable to discover those objects which can only be spiritually discerned. He is blind and ignorant in the things of God, and obstinate too in his ignorance. He is in the dark, and he loves darkness; and being a slave to the prince of the powers of darkness, he is taught to hate the light; and he hates it with a perfect hatred. He flies from it, lest his works should be manifest, and their horrid deformity should fill him with shame and painful conviction. While he is in this condition, and every man is in it by nature, the eyes of his understanding have no more perception of any spiritual object, than his bodily eyes would have of material objects, if there was no light to enlighten them. The organ of sight would remain; but then, without light, it would be of no more use than if it was quite destroyed. The scripture has given us a melancholy account of this spiritual darkness and blindness, and represents it to be so far above the power of nature

to remove, that it was one principal end of Christ's coming from heaven to preach recovery of sight to the blind. And to enable him to recover it, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon him without measure; for it required the power of an almighty spirit to cure the obstinate blindness of a sinful world, who loved darkness rather than light. Read the first chapter of the Romans, and you will there find, what horrid deeds of darkness were, and always will be, the fruits of nature, when left to its own fancied light. The apostle does not scruple to declare the refined taste of this polite, classical people, "that they were become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." The imagination of their finest poets—even Virgil's imagination, St. Paul being judge—was vain. And Tully with his great parts, with his vast reading, and all his attainments, had a foolish heart, St. Paul being judge, and in the things of God was exceeding dark. And this was true of the rest of the heathen world, as well as of the Romans. When St. Paul received his commission from Jesus Christ, it run in these words—"I send thee to the Gentiles to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light." And accordingly we find it the principal subject of his preaching and writing, to call them out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. His Ephesians he cautions, iv. 8—"Not to walk as other Gentiles in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." And lest this darkness and blindness should be supposed to take place only in the heathen world, the scripture has expressly declared it is the case of every son of fallen Adam, of whom not one in his natural state can attain to the knowledge of saving truth; "for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know him, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. And for want of this spiritual discernment, the apostle says, that the natural man, that is, every man in a state of nature, not only does not, but also cannot, there is an absolute impossibility that he should, know the things of the Spirit of God. Nay, when they are proposed to him, they appear to be foolishness, and he receiveth them not.

But why need I multiply texts in defence of a truth, for which scripture speaks so plain, and matter of fact speaks for itself? It is an undoubted truth, that there was no saving knowledge in the heathen world. We therefore call it heathen, because it wanted this Christian knowledge. What discoveries did the classical ages of Greece and Rome make in the doctrines of salvation? Rather, what had they not done to obliterate the scope and intent of the ceremonies, which God had instituted to keep up the knowledge of these doctrines? The very traces of them were so entirely lost, that among the numerous altars in the famous university of Athens, there was but one erected to anything like divinity, and that was to an unknown god. St. Paul made an excellent use of this inscription, taking occasion from it to preach Christianity to the Athenians, and assuring them that this god, confessedly unknown, was Jesus Christ; and if a faith in him, that purifies the heart, and that works in a holy life, be the basis of saving knowledge, then neither Greeks nor Romans had any of it; for in none of their authors do we find the least mention made of the nature, virtue, and efficacy of the purifying faith in Jesus Christ.

And this matter of fact is confirmed by every day's experience. Are we not forced to teach children the first rudiments of letters, and as their minds open, the first rudiments of saving knowledge? Is not a Christian education everywhere acknowledged to be necessary, as well to restrain and subdue the headstrong passions of corrupt nature, as to instil the wholesome truths of Christian faith and obedience? And are there not, in every country, schools and universities founded for these laudable purposes? And when we leave these places of education, does not every good steward of the mysteries of God still find the necessity of continal study and application to the written word, that he may be able out of his treasure to bring forth things new and old for his own and his people's instruction in righteousness; and these circumstances may convince us, that we are naturally blind and ignorant in the saving truths of the gospel. We know only as much as we are taught. Without the light of revelation, the inhabitants of England would be no wiser in the things of God, than

the inhabitants of the deserts of Africa—the same spiritual darkness would cover both lands, the same gross darkness the people. And whether they be polite or savage it makes no difference, until the sun of righteousness arise to dispel their heavy night of ignorance; for what the sun is to the natural world, such is Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness, to the spiritual world. The scripture hath set him forth as the only light of the spirits of men, from whom all saving knowledge must flow; "for he was made unto us wisdom," says the apostle. In his divine nature, wisdom—perfect and infinite wisdom—is essentially inherent. He is the all-wise God, in whom are stored all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which he was pleased, as our Saviour, to open for our use and to communicate. The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom, from whom, by the covenant of grace it was to flow; and ever since the fall it has been flowing in the richest streams. And from him every sinner must be enlightened before he can enter into the light of life; for he said of himself, "I am the light of the world;" and he must fulfil his word by enlightening every dark, benighted soul, until the number of the elect, the children of light, shall be perfected, and then he will shine for ever in the fulness of glory in the heavenly Jerusalem; for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in his light for ever and ever. Thus the light has been, and always will be, the glorious title of the incarnate God. He took this name to denote his gracious office of enlightening our blind and dark understandings. Under this character the prophet Isaiah speaks of him (ix. 2.) "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." These words are applied to Christ by an infallible interpreter. St. Matthew makes them relate to Christ's being a light to lighten the Gentiles. And again in the same prophet the Lord saith (xlix. 6.) "It is too little a thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up only the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii. 47.) apply these words to Christ: he was the true light, the day-spring from on high that visited the Gentiles, to give them the knowledge of salvation; for if the eyes of them who sit in darkness and the shadow of death be ever opened, if they see that they have lost the way to heaven, if they desire to walk in it, and are enabled to go on steadfastly unto the end, all this is the work of the divine light, in whom whosoever believeth shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

From these scriptures it is evident, that every man who cometh into the world is by nature dark and blind in the things of God. Sin blinded his eyes, and left him without the least spiritual discernment. The intellectual faculty indeed is not totally destroyed. The organ of sight is not annihilated. It remains, but not enlightened. It is in the same state our eyes would be, if the sun, moon, and stars were to withhold their shining, and not one ray of light was left in the creation. If men could live in this gross darkness, the organ of sight would not be destroyed, but it would be quite useless. All things would be invisible, because whatsoever doth make manifest is light. And this is the state of the soul; for the eye of the soul can no more see without its proper light, than the eye of the body can see without its proper light. And what the sun is to the body, that is Christ to the soul. He is the light of the world, not of this outward world, which is abundantly supplied from the fountain of created light, but he is the light of the spiritual world, which lay in darkness and the shadow of death, until he arose with healing under his wings, and brought with him from heaven the reviving light of life.

Upon the authority of God's word these truths are established. The evidence for them is clear and full. If our bodily eyes cannot see without light, it is equally certain, that our spiritual eyes cannot see without Christ; because both are spoken of in the same language, and under the same expressions. And as he is the Lord God omnipotent, he is certainly able to enlighten the darkest soul; and as he is God incarnate, he is engaged to do it. He will use his almighty power; and if he give the word, "Let there be light," there will be light. Upon

the strength of this evidence we must believe, that it is the name, and the office, and the glory of Jesus Christ, to be the light of the faithful through this dark wilderness of sin and sorrow.

Convinced of this, there is an important inquiry to be made, without which our conviction will be of no use; and that is, have we reduced it to practice? Since Christ is the foundation of all saving truth, have we been led to seek it from him, and him only? In our studies of divine learning, do we always read the scripture with humility and prayer, desiring, in the royal psalmist's words, which are devout and short, and which contain an excellent prayer always to be used before we open a Bible, "Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things in thy law." And in our studies of human learning, have we taken Christ for a light to guide us and bless us, that we might attain more understanding than the aged? Rather have we not robbed the eternal light of his name, and office, and glory, by seeking saving truth from the light of nature? If God be true, and the scriptures which I have read be his word—nature is dark and blind. To talk of the light of fallen nature, and all nature is fallen, is more absurd than to talk of the darkness of light. There cannot be a more wicked contradiction to God and his word, to experience and matter of fact, than for men professing Christianity to talk about the light of sinful, dark, and blind nature; neither can there be a greater insult offered to the incarnate God, than to seek that light which he was made incarnate on purpose to give, from metaphysics, or any science that pretends to manifest spiritual objects without revelation; neither can there be a greater crime, than to think of seeing and reasoning *à priori*, because this is God's incommunicable attribute, of which he is so jealous, that for pretending to it we were all cast out of paradise. In honour, then, to the God whom we worship, and out of love to our own souls, let us talk no more of the light of fallen nature; let us degrade the unnatural science of metaphysics, and forget all abstracted reasonings; they can give us no light in the things of God, but what is borrowed, and it is fainter than the faintest stars; and were they brighter than they are, yet when the sun arises, his superior lustre hides their pale and glimmering rays. God be praised, the sun of righteousness has arisen among us in perfect beauty, and false science is hiding her head. He shines with his noon-day glory upon this highly favoured church. Long may he shine unrivalled by any fancied light of fallen nature. And may his brightest beams enlighten this university, that every member of it, guided by his word and Spirit, may receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the person of Jesus Christ.

If it should be inquired, in what manner Christ enlightens the spirits of men, whether it be in some certain regular way, or he has left no sure direction in this case: the answer is, God has established the means of grace for this very purpose, of which his word is the principal—"For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light." And when his good Spirit accompanies the hearing or reading of the word, then it is indeed a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths. Then the word discovers to us the wretched darkness of our natural state, strips reason of all its high and divine titles, and thereby humbles us before God, and brings us low before his footstool, waiting upon him in all the means of grace, and particularly in prayer, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may shine into our dark and sinful hearts. To expect this light without the use of the instituted means is enthusiasm; and to expect to keep this light, after you once have it, without continuing in the use of these means, is the very madness of enthusiasm. In them God has promised to be found of those that seek him. Out of them you have no promise; and you may as reasonably hope God will create a new light for you to read by in the night, as that he will enlighten you without the established means, without prayer, and the word and sacraments. And therefore, whenever you are tempted to entertain such hopes, be assured it is a delusion of the devil's, and beware, at the peril of your souls, lest the light which you suppose to be in you be darkness; for remember it is written, "Woe be unto them that put darkness for light and light for darkness." In order to keep clear of this woe, let us wait in the use of the appointed means, and then we may with truth and soberness expect, that Christ will enlighten us

with all saving truth, and particularly with a full and practical conviction of that great truth, which I proposed to consider in the second place, *viz.* That Jesus Christ is the foundation of all acceptance with God the Father.

The same sinfulness which darkened the faculties of the soul, and separated us from God, stirred up his holiness, and justice, and truth against us. Against these attributes we had sinned, and they were become our enemies, and until they received full satisfaction, God the Father would not accept us. He declared under the law that he would accept nothing in atonement but what was perfect, and perfection is not in the sinner. The sacrifices were to be without blemish. This was the standing rule—"Whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you—and whosoever offereth a peace-offering or a free-will offering, it shall be perfect, to be accepted, there shall be no blemish therein." (Lev. xxii. 20, 21.) This was both to shadow out the absolute perfection of our holy, harmless, and undefiled high-priest, who should by the one offering of himself make a perfect satisfaction for sin, and also to convince the sinner of his utter inability to make any satisfaction: for the sinfulness of his nature and the sinfulness of his life would render every thing he could do imperfect and sinful, until he should be accepted in the Beloved.

Men are not much affected with the sinfulness of their nature until Christ enlighten them. Sin which first blinded their eyes, by its deceitfulness keeps them blinded. And although the fountain of iniquity, the corrupt heart within, is always sending out filthy streams, yet it gives them little uneasiness until the divine light break in, and lay open to view its impurity. Then the sinner finds and confesses, that he is by nature a child of wrath. He freely subscribes to the scripture account of the corruption of mankind, as it is described by Moses and the prophets, and expressly treated of in the 14th and 53d Psalms, upon which St. Paul has given us a comment in the 3d chapter of the Romans, and he sums it up in these emphatical words: "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

If any doubt should remain concerning the meaning of these scriptures, our church has removed it in her 9th article, where she determines, that "original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit, and therefore in every person born into the world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." This is a truly scriptural account of man's sinful and guilty state by nature, to which add the sinfulness of his life, and you separate him still farther from God: for what man is he that liveth and sinneth not? And sin is the transgression of the law—and the law is holy, just, and good—it is so pure and spiritual, that it cannot overlook the least offence. It must have perfect unerring obedience in thought, word, and deed, or it puts the offender under the curse: for it is written, "Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." You must continue (without intermission) in all things (not keeping nine commandments and breaking the tenth, not keeping them all outwardly, and breaking them in thought) that are written in the book of the law to do them; not only to purpose well, and to make good resolutions, but you must also do and execute them, or the law can show you no mercy. And which of us has kept the law in this perfect manner? Who can say, that he never offended in thought, word, or deed? Certainly every mouth must be stopped, and all the world must plead guilty before that righteous Judge, who trieth the very hearts and reins.

Now God has already past the decree against a sinful nature, and against a sinful life. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." God is faithful and just to fulfil his decrees—he is almighty to execute them—and what can man do under a state of guilt and condemnation to reverse them? Two things are requisite, each of which are as much out of his power as to create a world. He must first change his own nature, which is like the Ethiopian's changing his skin, and he must be renewed in the spirit of his mind with every sweet and holy temper. And then this change wrought by himself must make a full satisfaction to the

holiness of God for his past pollution, to the justice of God for the violation of his laws, and to the truth of God, that he may be true, and yet remit the threatened punishment. But alas! man has neither will nor power to change his nature: who can say I have made my heart clean—I am pure from my sin? No man can truly say, I have done it: for it is God's work. To create a clean heart, is as great an act, as to create the heart at first; and accordingly we find the prophet praying to God for it—"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." And until God create a clean heart, how can any thing clean proceed from it? Who in an impure nature can do a pure action? Who under the curse of the law, and under the sentence of condemnation, can perform a meritorious service? Who by his own works can attain such perfect unspotted righteousness, that God the Father will accept him in virtue of it? The scripture hath determined that there is none righteous, no not one, and that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified; and our church has determined the same in her articles and homilies, affirming that we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not for our own works or deservings.

A great part of the mistakes in religion arises from men's not attending to these truths. They have not a deep conviction of their lost estate by nature, which occasions their not seeing in its proper light the necessity of their recovery by grace. The malady of a sinful heart is not painful enough to make them apply to the sovereign Physician: nor is the burden of a sinful life heavy enough to persuade them to seek the comfort of this scripture—"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But when conscience alarms them, when guilt terrifies, and they read the sentence of condemnation passed upon them in the law, then helpless and miserable in themselves, with transports of joy will they receive the glad tidings of the gospel, which discovers to them how they may be reconciled to an offended God. To such persons, whose eyes the Lord has opened to see their guilt and their misery, the gospel sets forth Jesus Christ as the sole foundation of their acceptance. We are said to be accepted in the Beloved, who came in our nature to work out that perfect righteousness for us, which infinite holiness, and justice, and truth required, and which we could not by our own power attain; but by the merits of his obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection, he is able to clothe us with the immaculate robe of his righteousness, in which we shall be presented before God the Father without spot of sin unto salvation.

It must be always remembered, that our Saviour was God and man united in one Christ; by which union, whatever he did and suffered for us became truly divine and infinite. Jesus shed his blood, and the scripture says it was the blood of God. Jesus died for us, and the scripture says, that God laid down his life. In what sense can these expressions be understood, unless the Godhead and manhood were united in one person? This fundamental doctrine of God's being in Christ reconciling the world unto himself must never be forgotten, when we are speaking of the merits of Christ's actions and sufferings. Our nature was impure and corrupt, the imaginations of our hearts were only evil continually. Christ came in a pure spotless nature, separate from sinners, that whatever he did for them might appear without blemish before God the Father. He began his ministry with resisting the devil and all his temptations, to atone for our yielding to them; for us he conquered, and from his conquest, grace is derived to the faithful to resist all his temptations. Then he obeyed the law; its purity, its spirituality, its extensiveness, could find in him no transgression in thought, word, or deed. Its highest demands were answered: for according to its utmost rigour, "he continued in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." And thus he redeemed us from the curse of the law, and as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Then he humbled himself to suffer what we ought to have suffered for our disobedience. The holy, innocent Jesus bore our griefs and carried our sorrows throughout the scene of his bitter passion. See him on the eve of the crucifixion in the garden, alone, prostrate upon the cold ground, in an extreme sharp night, and lo! at the sight of that load which he

was going to take upon him, a preternatural sweat flows through his raiment, and falls to the ground in great drops. Oh cursed sin! with what an holy hatred ought we to crucify thee, since the prospect only of the number and guilt of our sins, and the wrath and vengeance of the Father due to them, forced our blessed Lord to sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Being apprehended, he came as a free, ready victim to bear those sufferings, of which we cannot form a perfect idea at present, and unless the vengeance of a justly offended God should hereafter pour the vials of his wrath upon our guilty heads, we shall never know them. God grant that Christ may have endured them for every one of us. The outward part of his passion was but a faint picture of what he endured, when the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and yet of the outward part he might truly say, " Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if ever there was any sorrow like unto my sorrow," &c. The shame that ought to cover all our faces he endured; for us the guilty, and shameless in guilt, if by continuing in sin we put him again to an open shame, he was despised and rejected of men; he was mocked, and derided, and spit upon, buffeted and scourged, crowned with thorns and blindfolded, falsely accused, and falsely condemned. Then behold him bearing his cross. When we see him fainting and sinking under the load, and his face and raiment covered with blood, does it not bring to mind what he says of himself in the book of Psalms? " The ploughers ploughed upon my back and made long furrows"—they ploughed up his back with the long and deep wounds of their stripes and scourges; but by these stripes we were healed. Nay, he says more in another Psalm, that he was so wounded from head to foot, there was no whole part in his body: and you cannot doubt of it, if you raise your eyes to the cross, and see the suffering, bleeding Lamb of God in the last scene of his passion. And yet this was the least part of his sufferings. " Give me any grief," says the wise man, " but the grief of the mind, for a wounded spirit who can bear?" Who indeed can bear a spirit wounded of God? When Jesus was in the garden, his soul was exceeding sorrowful, was in an agony, even unto death; but these were only the beginning of sorrows. When he took upon him the iniquities of us all, and almighty justice finding them upon him demanded full satisfaction, and received it to the uttermost farthing, then he had a wounded spirit, such as all the men upon earth, no, not all the holy angels in heaven could have sustained for a moment. He bore it for six hours, hanging upon the cursed tree, until all was finished; then he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. And thus he was made sin for us, and suffered for our sins, who knew no sin himself, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: and he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, and tasted death for every man. He died to save our souls and bodies from the power of death. And he rose again, that we might receive justification to life, that our souls might arise here from the grave of sin, and that our bodies might in God's good time arise from the grave of death, and both of them, united in a glorified state, might receive eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And being thus made perfect through obeying and suffering, through death and resurrection, he became the author of eternal salvation. He wrought out such perfect righteousness to be imputed unto sinners, that he is now able to save them to the uttermost. He has the infinite merit of his obedience to atone for their disobedience. He has the infinite merit of his sufferings to free them from suffering. He died, to save them from the first and the second death. He rose again, that they might rise to a newness of life here in grace, and to life everlasting in glory. And he is now the one Mediator between God and man, able and willing to plead the fulness of his merits for the acceptance of every sinner, who comes unto God the Father through him. From

Hence it follows, That Jesus Christ is the foundation of our acceptance. If God the Father ever receive us as just and righteous, it must be in the perfect righteousness of his Son. We must be accepted in the Beloved; in whom the Father was well pleased, and through whom he will be well pleased with us. The passages before cited clearly prove, that this is the doctrine of all scripture. The Psalmist has given us the sentiments of the Old Testament worthies—" I,

will go in the strength of the Lord God— I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." And God forbid that we, under the New Testament, should make mention of any other. Shall we go about to establish our own righteousness in opposition to the righteousness of God? Or shall we, under the guilt of original and actual sin, think of working out any righteousness for which we shall be accepted in part or altogether? If we could, then Christ obeyed and suffered in vain. If we could attain saving knowledge by the light of nature, and could act agreeably to it by the law of nature, then of what use would be the light and law of the gospel? But nature has no light, it is dark and blind in the things of God, and what can its law be, that is discovered by a dark and blind nature, but darkness and blindness? Nay, it is something worse. If fallen nature has any law, it is the law of the members, which warreth against the law of God, and bringeth a man into captivity to the law of sin. This is the only law of nature to be met with in the word of God: for nature is fallen and corrupt; it is depraved in the will and affections, as well as ignorant in the understanding. It is always inclined and prone to evil; "for the flesh," (which stands in scripture for the fallen depraved affections of the natural man) "lusteth always against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary the one to the other"—the will of the natural man is always contrary to the will of God; from hence it follows, that what is called the religion of nature, is contrary to the religion of God: because nature used with religion confines it to man's nature, no other nature being concerned in the question; and man's nature is fallen and corrupt, sinful in the fountain, and sinful in the streams, and what then can the religion be, which this nature is able to discover and to practise? Certainly it must be a blind and corrupt religion. Jesus Christ makes no part of it. He is not the foundation upon which it stands. The finest system of the religion of nature that ever was delineated, builds nothing upon him, and since there is no other foundation but him, consequently it stands upon nothing. And if the heart was not corrupt as well as blind, it would be unaccountable what should tempt men with the pure word of God in their hands, which is able to make them wise unto salvation, to neglect it, and to write, and read, and study those antichristian systems, which can teach no wisdom but what is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Men and brethren, be not offended; it behoves me to use great plainness of speech. If I was to speak smooth things, and to give flattering titles to the religion of nature, I should not be the servant of Christ; for this religion was set up, and has been used, to hurt his interest; and when we see it has succeeded, surely it is high time for those servants, who love their master's praise more than the praise of men, to set themselves strenuously against it. Happy will it be for this place, if the noble company of his servants should increase, until the religion of nature has not one admirer left. Jesus Christ will be exalted among you in proportion as the religion of nature falls in esteem: and he has promised, "them that honour me, I will honour." Honour Jesus Christ, and exalt him above all, and then his highest honours shall descend upon this university, and he will make her very enemies to be at peace with her. Oh for that happy day, when the honour that is of God shall be sought after as the crown and reward of all your studies! And why need we doubt it? We have an earnest before our eyes. Do we not see the religion of nature losing its interest every day? Do not men begin to be afraid of trusting the vast concerns of eternity upon it? And have they not good reason? For has it not appeared, from what has been said, that its first principles are antichristian? They suppose man's natural faculties to be able to investigate the things of God—Scripture absolutely denies it. They suppose he has will and power to act agreeably to the will of God—Scripture absolutely denies that he has either will or power. They suppose that, by practising the duties of natural religion, you may altogether or in part render yourselves acceptable to God—Scripture absolutely denies this, declaring that there is no other foundation of acceptance but Jesus Christ. And besides, the religion of nature manifestly tends to rob the God of our salvation of his glory, and to lessen the merits of his righteousness, as much as scripture tends to exalt both. And both are exalted, wherever the scripture is received pure and unmixed with human systems; and we have melancholy experience of the con-

tempt offered to both, wherever the religion of nature is embraced. The doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, on which all scripture stands, makes no part of this religion. So that the religion of the Bible and the religion of nature have different objects of worship. The Christian worships one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; but this is rank idolatry with the natural man, who adores one supreme being, a metaphysical divinity, existing in one person, with certain imaginary attributes, such as infinitely extended, filling all space, &c.—Hence he explodes the divinity of Jesus Christ—hence he despises the authority of his laws—hence that dissoluteness of morals throughout the kingdom, which all men see, and even the professors of natural religion confess. Would to God they were convinced, what a great share they have in it, and how much of it they have to answer for. It would be for their present and eternal peace, if, instead of maintaining and teaching this unscriptural religion, which is the sink of heresy and corruption, they would join their hearts and hands in exalting the religion of Jesus Christ, and his infallible word, wherein that religion is contained, and in labouring to bring the lives as well as the opinions of men into obedience to it. How highly it is incumbent upon you, my brethren, to promote this much desired reformation, I need not further urge at present, than by reminding you of a very awful truth, to which we have all set our hands, and may God set our hearts to act agreeably to it. What I mean is the 18th article of our church, wherein we have declared, "They also are to be had accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." In this article we have given in our public testimony before God and his church against the light and the law of nature, and with our own mouths have put both of them under the curse. And shall we with the same mouths afterwards preach up the light and law of nature, and pronounce them blessed? God forbid. I hope his good Spirit will keep us free from this monstrous guilt, and enable us in all our preaching to set forth only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved.

But it may be here enquired, if man in a state of nature be at enmity with God, and can be accepted only through Jesus Christ, by what means shall he seek this reconciliation? The scripture has given us this plain and easy method; God the Father accepts us through the all-perfect righteousness of Christ; this righteousness is imputed unto us by faith; and the true living faith is a divine grace wrought in the soul by the giver of every good and perfect gift. It is not the result of comparing evidence, and of giving the assent to the strongest arguments; for a man may do this without the least grain of saving faith: but it is, according to St. Paul, the gift of God.—And in another place he calls it one of the fruits of the Spirit.—And St Peter says, it is God that purifieth the heart by faith. He enables the sinner, who finds his want of Christ's righteousness, to seek it, and to lay hold of it: for whoever hungers and thirsts after Christ's righteousness, has a promise, that he shall be filled, even filled with peace and joy in believing that this righteousness is imputed unto him, and with the love of God, which is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. And if there be any truth in God or man, this promise is now fulfilled, and every one that enters into our Lord's kingdom finds righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Some persons think they can easily evade the force of this reasoning by suggesting it to be possible, that all this may be a delusion. If a man is not acquainted with the scripture marks of true faith, and is not careful to compare them with his own experience, possibly he may be deluded, and fancy, that God has accepted him, when he has not. But if he sets out deeply convinced of his want of faith, waits for it in the instituted way, in that way receives it, and the effects of true faith follow upon receiving it, then if such a person may be deluded, there is no certainty in the world. The scriptures were written to direct us in these points, and they are so plain, that the wayfaring man, though foolish, cannot err therein. They have given us one infallible rule to guide our inquiries, which is to examine the nature of faith by its purifying virtue. Wherever the

true faith is, it purifies the heart, cleansing it from the pollution and from the guilt of sin, and destroying also the dominion of sin, so that the believer daily grows in grace, and goes on in his Christian course, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

If faith does not work thus in an holy life, it is indeed a delusion. What doth it profit my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? If he have not a working faith, an active, operative grace, purifying the heart from sin, and producing in the clean heart all the fruits of the Spirit, he wants the scripture marks of true faith; and let him talk ever so much, and be ever so strongly persuaded of his acceptance with God, he is in a dangerous delusion. It is but a dead thing which he supposes to be the living faith: for it is written, "As the body without breath is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Works are the breath of faith. If it be alive it will breathe, as certainly as the living body breathes. If it have no breath, no works to evidence its life, the scripture looks upon it to be a dead carcase; but if it breathes, and acts, and abounds in every good word and work to the glory of God, and to the service of men, then we may with as much certainty pronounce it to be the true faith, as we can pronounce the body to be alive, when it is able to perform all the offices of its animal life: for as the body while it breathes is alive, so faith while it works is alive also. In this case there can be no delusion; because we follow the sure rule laid down for our direction, "By their fruits ye shall know them." How can we mistake the fruits of the Spirit for the fruits of the flesh? Is not every tree known by its own fruit? Do men ever think of gathering figs of thorns, or grapes of a bramble-bush? The fruits of grace, and of fallen nature, are as opposite as the two spirits which produce them. The one abounds in the works of the flesh, the other crucifies the flesh with its affections and lusts. The one fills the mind with spiritual pride, envy, and malice, the other begins with humility, and works by love. The one lives in open transgression of the laws of God, the other conforms his words and works, and even the thoughts of his heart, to the standard of scripture. Can you see these different fruits, and be at a loss to determine who is the author of each? Surely we want no evidence to disprove the pretensions of an adulterer, a fornicator, an unclean person, and the rest mentioned by the apostle. Their lives speak their want of faith. By their fruits we see that they have not the root of the matter within them, because they hold the truth in unrighteousness. They must either have deluded themselves, or else they are downright hypocrites: for it is of the very essence of true faith to destroy sin, and to work in an holy obedience. When we are accepted in the Beloved, and faith in his blood has purified our hearts, then we are, through his grace, both prepared and also able to show this work of faith in our lives and conversations; and this point comes to be considered under the third head, which was to prove, That Jesus Christ is the foundation of all holy obedience. But this I must leave for the subject of another discourse, and would only observe at present from what has been said, that since Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge, it is our duty to seek it from him in all means of grace, and especially in the word: for the commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes. Whoever hears and reads it with humility and prayer, will find the eyes of his understanding enlightened. He will see clearly the things of God, and will see more clearly than others can, the useful arts and sciences. If he study them under the direction of divine grace, and with a view to the divine glory, the eternal light will shine into his heart, and give him more understanding than his teachers. And since Jesus Christ is the foundation of our acceptance with God the Father, let us seek to be accepted through faith, and never think of setting up any righteousness of our own in opposition to his. He is the Lord our righteousness, through whose merits imputed unto us by faith, God will receive us as just and righteous. And may the Holy Spirit give you the practical conviction of these two important truths, that you may find the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, and may, through his all-perfect righteousness, be presented before God the Father without spot of sin unto salvation; to whom with the Son and the Holy Spirit, three persons in the unity of the Godhead, be equal glory, worship, and praise, in the church militant and triumphant, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. iii. 11.

From the scope and design of these words, which were opened in a former discourse, it was proposed to consider the following particulars:

First, That Jesus Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge.

Secondly, He is the foundation of all acceptance with God the Father.

Thirdly, He is the foundation of all holy obedience. And,

Lastly, He is the foundation of our present and eternal happiness.

Under the first head it was proved, that man's natural ignorance and blindness in the things of God made it necessary he should be enlightened. Jesus Christ came into the world to open the blind eyes, and to be a light to them that sat in darkness. He says of himself, "I am the light of the world, and whosoever believeth in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He is as truly the light of the spiritual, as the sun is the light of the material, world, and whoever seeks to be enlightened with any saving truth, must receive it from the gracious influence of his divine rays. And under the

Second head, man's natural corruption and actual sinfulness were considered. The holiness, justice, and truth of God could not accept the sinner, while he lay in this state of pollution and guilt, and he could do nothing to deliver himself from it, but must have lived here and for ever separated from God, unless Jesus Christ had obeyed and suffered, died and risen again, to work out that perfect righteousness, through the merits of which, imputed unto the sinner by faith, God the Father will now accept him, and receive him as just and righteous into his love and into his heaven. From whence it follows, by direct consequence, that until he be thus accepted he can do no good works, which comes to be considered under the

Third head, viz., that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all holy obedience. Man in his natural state cannot perform any holy obedience. He wants both will and power, until his person be accepted through Jesus Christ, and united to him by true and lively faith. The doctrine of our church upon this point is very clear and full. In the 13th article, entitled, "Of works before justification," she teaches that—"Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace or (as the school authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." Our works are not acceptable, until we have the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit to render our persons accepted. Nay, the very best works we can do, if they be not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, have certainly in them the nature of sin. "We doubt not but they have the nature of sin," is a very strong expression; but our pious reformers could not soften it. They had left the bishop of Rome upon account of the doctrine of merit, which the Papists hold, and it is the most dangerous of all their tenets; for hereby they go about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God. All the reformers joined in asserting justification by faith only, knowing that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. It is impossible to be more clear and express against the merit of works, than the compilers of our articles and homilies are; they seem to have been guided in their opinion by two principal reasons, both taken from scripture, the first respecting God, the second ourselves.

It is impossible to do any good works well pleasing to God, until we are accepted in Christ, because our whole nature is sinful—in it dwelleth no good thing, and without the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, no good thing can ever dwell. The scripture declares us to be by nature children of

wrath. We became objects of God's wrath when, by the original offence, mankind transgressed his holy, just, and good law. Then his holiness, justice, and goodness became concerned to inflict the threatened punishment, which they did inflict, and to which every son of Adam is subject, until he be accepted through Jesus Christ. In this fallen state he is like an attainted rebel, who cannot do any action that is deemed good and valid in law, until his attainder be reversed, and he be restored in blood. This is our very case in spirituals. What can we do that will be deemed good and valid in the court of heaven, while we are under a state of forfeiture, our persons are guilty, and our whole nature (as our church expresses it) deserves God's wrath and damnation ?

And we are still more incapable of doing any acceptable works, if we consider the state we are in by actual transgression. We are under sentence of condemnation for the first offence ; for the law is of so pure and spiritual a nature as to reach to the inmost thoughts of the heart. It requires truth in the inward parts, and expects perfect obedience there, as well as in the words and actions. The style of it is, " Do this, and thou shalt live." It promises life, but to them only who never err from its commandments. One single failing cuts us off from the promised life, and puts us under the curse : for it is written " Cursed is every man who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Now the same law which has brought him in guilty before God, cannot acquit him afterwards ; because he is already a convict, is sentenced, and under the curse, and he can think of no method of escaping the deserved punishment, but to pay an unerring obedience for the future. Supposing he could do this, yet it would be making no satisfaction ; because after one transgression by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified. It is an adjudged case, that partial obedience can make no atonement to the law which required perfect obedience : the equity of this proceeding we acknowledge in our own laws. If a criminal, found guilty of murder, was to allege in his defence that he had broken no other law of the land, that he was not a thief, nor an adulterer, &c., would this plea be allowed in court ? Would he be acquitted of the murder, because it was not attended with robbery ? No. The judge would observe to him, that he came there to be tried for a murder, and that he was found guilty by the law, and as such must be condemned ; for he that said, Thou shalt not steal, said also, Thou shalt do no murder. Now if thou commit no robbery, yet if thou kill, thou art a transgressor of the law : for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all, and is under guilt and condemnation as if he had offended against the whole law. The law of God is pure and spiritual, and allows of no deviation from it. If it gives life, it must have perfect and unerring obedience : where this is wanting in one instance, it cannot take partial obedience as any atonement for disobedience : from whence it follows, that men under the guilt of original and actual sin cannot, with respect to God, perform any holy obedience. And

With respect to ourselves, there is another reason, which being taken from a matter of fact, should carry with it full conviction. Our fallen nature is so entirely depraved, that it has neither will nor power to perform any holy obedience. The old man of sin, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, can do nothing but sin. And until he be put off and crucified with all his affections and lusts, we cannot put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ; for we are not only corrupt, but also under the bondage of corruption : not only sinners, but also slaves to sin, sold under sin, and led captive to commit it by the devil at his will. Sin has such an absolute dominion, that although it exercises the most cruel tyranny, yet men have no desire to shake off its yoke. Sin wears away their bodies in its service, and yet they are pleased with their own destruction, and sin on. Whenever the tyrant commands—Do this, the natural man doeth it, though it be at the peril of his life. When sin puts him upon a course of uncleanness, which he knows will bring the infirmities of old age upon him before he has come to manhood, or a course of intemperance, which must end in painful and acute distempers, the poor slave submits. And must not sin reign in his mortal body, since he thus obeys it in the lusts thereof ? Must it not have absolute dominion over him, since he thus yields his members

instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, and yields them even to work out his own destruction? And when he sees this destruction before his eyes, yet he has no desire to avoid it; we have neither will nor power to deliver ourselves from sin's dominion, because when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. The soul was enslaved, and without strength to recover its liberty as well as the body. Which of its faculties are free and able to cast off the tyranny of sin? Can this good desire arise first in the imagination? It cannot. The imaginations of the heart of the natural man are evil, and only evil, and that continually. Can it arise in the understanding? It cannot; for it is in darkness. When the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek after God, he found none, no not one—they were wise enough to do evil, but to do good they had no knowledge: neither had they a will to choose it; for the natural man follows the will of the flesh, which is always contrary to the will of God, and with the heart and affections he serves the law of sin.

Thus the dominion of sin is universal. It commands all the faculties of soul and body, which serve it with a willing and uninterrupted obedience; and from what has been said with respect to God, and with respect to ourselves, it is evident that the natural man is utterly unable to perform any holy obedience. This is the plain doctrine of scripture, and it is confirmed by our church in her 10th article, which declares, that "the condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." Both the good will and the power to work with it come from Christ; and the manner in which he bestows both upon us is thus described in scripture. God the Father accepts us as righteous through the merits of Jesus Christ, whereby we are justified; upon which we are united to Christ, through faith given us by his Holy Spirit; and from this union we receive continual supplies of grace to enable us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are well pleasing unto God the Father.

This vital union with Christ, the head of the body, is the principle of divine life in all his members, and it is expressed in scripture by various phrases, which denote the reality and absolute certainty of it, and which cannot admit of a metaphorical sense, such as "Christ's dwelling in us, and we in him; our being rooted and planted into him, and built up in him; our being of one spirit and one flesh with him; our living and being led by his Spirit." And it is also represented by various images, such as the union between the head and the body:—What a strange body would it be, which had only a metaphorical union with the head? Between the bread and the eater:—What sort of a constitution must it be which could live upon metaphorical bread? And between the foundation and the building:—What kind of a building would it be, which should stand upon a metaphorical foundation? But chiefly between the vine and the branches, which our Lord has largely treated of in John xv. "I am the vine," says he, "ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." If any man abide in Christ, and bear much fruit to the glory of the Father, he must be as truly and as vitally united to Christ, as the branches are to the vine; for he is the root and stock, from whence the branches receive their nourishment, and are enabled to bring forth fruit; and therefore whoever is not united to Christ can have no principle of divine life in him, but is like a branch cut off from the stock and withered, whose end is to be burnt.

From these scriptures it is evident, that we cannot live to God, nor bring forth any fruit unto holiness until we are united to Christ, and have fellowship with him. The Spirit of God is the bond of this union; for he gives us the true faith, whereby the soul is enabled to reject every thing that would seperate it from Christ, and to cast away all hopes of salvation in its own endeavours and works, and thus placing no merit in any thing it can do, it closes in with the free offer of mercy in Christ Jesus, whom faith has a peculiar fitness to receive, and does

actually receive him with all his fulness, as these scriptures testify; "For we have access," says the apostle, "and entrance by faith into that grace of Christ, wherein we stand." And, again, "Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith." And that most holy faith, whereby Christ dwelleth in us, enables us to live the life of Christ: for by purifying all the faculties of the soul, it makes us to be like him, to love his image, and to desire it may be perfectly formed in our souls. And, accordingly, by the close and intimate union which faith keeps up between Christ and us, we are made comformable to his death and resurrection; for faith draws virtue from his death to destroy the dominion of sin, and from his resurrection to rise to newness of life. Nothing but the influence of the death of Christ, and a real fellowship with it, can free us from sin's dominion. We must be planted together in the likeness of his death, if we ever get any mortifying power over the body of sin. And we must be also planted into the likeness of his resurrection, that we, who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, may be quickened in Christ, and made alive in him. St. Paul had happy experience of this doctrine—"I am crucified," says he, "with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." And whoever is crucified with Christ in the same manner, has the body of sin destroyed, that henceforth he should not serve sin; and whoever liveth by the same faith in the Son of God, has continual supplies of grace from Jesus Christ to enable him to live a life of holiness unto God.

This is the scripture doctrine of holy obedience. We are therein taught that God must work in us whatever is well pleasing to him. St. Paul prays thus for his Hebrews: "Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ," who came in the flesh to destroy in us ungodliness and worldly lusts, that we might be fit to perform holy obedience. "The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," says he, "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And again another scripture saith, "We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works." When we are made new creatures in him, then have we a new nature with new affecctions, which delight to obey the will of God, as much as the old sinful nature hated it; for if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. He is renewed throughout, in body, soul, and spirit. The body, which sin enslaved and defiled, is cleansed by the blood of Christ, and consecrated by his Spirit for a holy temple to the living God. The soul is enriched with the divine graces of faith, and hope, and love, which work upon all the faculties, restraining the imagination, enlightening the understanding, regulating the will, and turning the heart and affections to God; and then renewing the spirit day by day with the sweet and holy tempers of the blessed Jesus, that the whole man may grow up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Nothing availeth in Christ Jesus but this new creature. God the Father will accept of no obedience, unless it be the work of this new nature. Our best duties and services are displeasing to him, unless we be renewed by faith in the spirit of the mind, as our church has clearly determined in the 12th article. "Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after (don't go before) justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit."

From these authorities it is evident, that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all holy obedience. Until you be accepted in him, you can do no good works; nay, without him you can do nothing. The scripture and our articles and homilies speak full to this point, and they entirely overthrow the destructive doctrine of the Papists and Socinians, who agree in maintaining the merit of works. Every true son of our church has renounced their heresies. The scripture has assured him, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; but he finds the sinfulness of his nature reigning in many unholy tempers, and breaking out into many offences, against which he strives, but not in his own strength; for he is convinced that his soul is by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and that all his striving can no more give it spiritual life, than rubbing and chafing a dead carcase can

restore to it animal life, and therefore he does not seek to attain holiness, while his nature continues corrupt and dead in sin. The gospel method is directly contrary. It first cleanses the heart, from whence are the issues of life, and then the streams will certainly run pure. It directs you to labour first to be reconciled unto God, that you may be accepted through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and justified by his merits, and then you will have a new nature inclined to holiness, and endued by the Holy Spirit with power to seek and to attain it. After you have received justification to life, you may go on with the work of sanctification; for by justification your nature is regenerate and new born, and sanctification is the proper work of this regenerate nature, as it brings all its parts and faculties into use, whereby they improve and grow in strength. Justification, which is the new birth of the soul, is like the first birth of the infant into this world. When it is born, it has all the parts of the body perfect; no new ones are added afterwards, only these grow in size and strength, until they reach to the stature of a man, as the graces grow in the justified soul until it arrive to a perfect man in Christ. And then God, who has been glorified by it upon earth, will receive it into his eternal glory through Jesus Christ our Lord—

Who is the foundation of our present and eternal happiness, as I proposed in the fourth and last place to consider. This is a direct consequence from what has been said, and does not require many words to illustrate it; for since the sinner has no saving knowledge, until Christ enlighten him; since God the Father will not accept his person, but through the righteousness of Christ, nor his works, but as done in Christ, and flowing from living faith in him, then it is certain that whatever happiness he enjoys must be derived from the Lord and giver of grace and glory. He can merit none; for when he has done all these things that are commanded him, which yet no man has done, he was even then to say, I am an unprofitable servant, I have done that which was my duty to do; and therefore I cannot deserve present, and much less eternal, happiness from the hand of God.

By present happiness I mean those comforts of the gospel which I have been describing, and which the heavenly Comforter administers to the sinner, when he is enlightened with saving truth, when he is convinced of his reconciliation with God the Father, and satisfied that the divine holiness, justice, and truth, are no longer his enemies, but will now make all things work together for his good: and when he is assured of the truth of his reconciliation, as well from the inward witness of the Spirit of God with his spirit, as from the holy obedience in which he now delights, and which he has power to perform, this happy soul enjoys the comforts of present salvation, which are daily strengthened in it more and more, as it grows in grace, and bears fairer and richer fruits of holiness: for this growth in grace is an evident proof of our acceptance with God, and a fruitful source of spiritual comfort: when we find ourselves renewed in the spirit of our minds, and are pleased with the will of God in the inner man, and are enabled to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments, the happiness arising from hence can no more be described than the joys of heaven. If you would know what blessings, love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the Spirit bring to the soul, O taste and see how gracious the Lord is. And whenever he gives you the experience of them, you will then find that in them heaven is already begun in the soul; and if by believing we can rejoice at present with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, what must our joy be when we receive the end of our faith, even the eternal salvation of our souls? When Jesus Christ admits us into his kingdom, and bestows upon us all his spiritual blessings in heavenly places, what happiness we shall then feel, tongue cannot utter, nor can heart conceive. And inconceivably great though it be, yet it is all the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, "for he hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."—And faith is the hand by which we receive it: "for he that believeth on me," saith the blessed Jesus, "hath everlasting life." He purchased it for us. We could not attain it by any of our own works, nor could the highest angel in heaven merit it for one of the sons of men. It was bought for us by an inestimable price, by the obedience and sufferings of the God-man Christ Jesus, and he therefore obeyed and suffered, died and rose again, that we might be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. He acted as our representative, by

which means we have an interest in all that he did and suffered. He resisted the temper, obeyed the law, suffered the punishment due to the transgression of it, even unto death, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sat down on the throne of glory, as the head and representative of all the elect people of God In all these things he acted as the head of the body the church; and we commonly say, a person is crowned, when the crown is put upon his head. Now our head is already crowned, and therefore so long as he possesses his glory, we his members shall possess ours, and shall share in the glories of our heavenly king. What these eternal glories are, it surpasseth all understanding to comprehend. The scripture has revealed them to us chiefly in negative descriptions. It removes from them that imperfection to which all sublunary good is subject. It calls them riches; but then they are not subject to rust and moth, nor can thieves break in to rob us of them. It compares them to an inheritance; but then it is always in peace: no armies can lay it waste, no irregular passion can interrupt the happy enjoyment of it; and there can be no fear of losing it, because all tears are wiped away from every eye; and upon every head there is placed a crown of glory, which is "incorruptible," has no principles of dissolution, and therefore no defect in it; is "undefiled," has no stain of sin, or infirmity under it, and "fadeth not away." All human glory, like a flower of the field, withers and dies; but this is always flourishing, and blooms in never-fading spring. Thus the scripture removes every thing from our heavenly happiness, which renders our present enjoyments imperfect; and then, to make the description full, puts eternity to it. And yet, even of this eternal happiness we have but faint ideas; we know it at present but in part. We shall know it better when our almighty Saviour bestows it upon us. When he admits us into his presence, receives us into his heaven, and places the never-fading crown of glory upon our heads, then we shall feel what an eternal weight of glory is. Then we shall enjoy that beatific vision, without which heaven would not be desirable, and we shall see the Lord Jesus face to face, and shall know that he is above all blessing and praise. We know indeed at present that he is God over all, blessed for ever; but the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, so that our knowledge and our praises are imperfect. But then we shall be free from this earthly clog, and shall see more of his excellences, and shall be more able to praise them. We shall continually find new beauties, new worlds of delight in him; for his perfections being infinite, will afford us fresh subject of praise to eternity. And our interest in them being an act of his free grace, will render them to us more precious, and the completion of them more sweet. Every new day of glory (if I may so speak, when time is no more) will bring us more in debt to his free grace. The holding of glory shall be free grace without end; so that Christ's relation of creditor, and ours of debtor, shall grow and be greater for ever. Redeemed sinners can never say, Now our tribute of praise to Jesus is fully paid, because they will be always contracting new debts, and while they stand confirmed in bliss, the more broken debtors will they be. The longer they enjoy the glory of heaven through millions of ages, the debt to the Lamb that purchased it for them by his blood with grow infinitely. Praises to eternity can take nothing from the debt; for the debt increases, while they are praising. And let the innumerable company of angels join the spirits of just men made perfect: let them raise their hearts and voices to the highest strains of praise, they would still fall short of the greatness of his merits. O Holy Spirit! now give us a heart and a tongue to join our imperfect praises with theirs. With them we ascribe salvation to the Lord God omnipotent. "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever."

I shall here finish the doctrinal parts of this discourse; but I cannot conclude without making a short application. Every useful doctrine may be reduced to practice; and all the Christian doctrines have a direct tendency to operate in our lives, and to produce their proper effects in our conversations. We have been considering some of the excellences of God our Saviour, which are not mere speculative points; because he was made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He is our all-wise prophet to enlighten the

blindness of our understanding, and to teach us saving knowledge. He is our al meritorious priest, through the merits of whose perfect sacrifice the pollution and the guilt of our sins are taken away, and we are accepted as righteous before God the Father. And he is our almighty king, by whose grace the dominion of sin is destroyed in us, and we are enabled to perform an holy obedience. " Jesus Christ is all and in all: for we are complete in him." Salvation from first to last, from the first ray of light which broke into our dark and sinful souls until we see Christ in the fulness of glory, is all his work, and to him must the honour of it be ascribed. He is the foundation on whom it all stands: for " other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Men, brethren, and fathers, suffer the word of exhortation. You profess, that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge: do you then seek it from him in the study of his holy word, and through the blessing of his good Spirit upon your studies? or are any of you seeking it from the unscriptural, unnatural light of nature, from that nature which is totally dark and blind, until the abstracted metaphysician has stolen some great truths from the revealed word, and then boasts that he was self-enlightened, and that they were self-irradiated upon his own mind by a more mysterious and enthusiastic light than the maddest Quaker ever pretended to. In their metaphysical reveries, let them talk of their light of nature; yet if God may be heard, nature is in darkness. It is blind in the things of God; nay more, until it be renewed, it cannot see and know them. To whom then would you go for the knowledge of them? To Christ, as held forth in his word, and applied by his Spirit, or rather to human learning and its arts and sciences? God forbid. They have not one ray of their own to give. Their boasted lustre is but a borrowed light. Blot the sun out of heaven, and these bright stars are at once in the blackness of darkness: for there is but one created sun to enlighten this material world, as there is but one uncreated Sun to enlighten the spiritual world here in grace, and for ever in glory. When the arts and sciences keep their proper station, reflecting the light cast upon them by the sun of righteousness, then the study of them is sanctified, and they are highly useful in the school of Christ; but unsanctified, they only tend to puff up and to feed the pride of corrupt nature. Let this be an answer to the adversary, who may object, that I am a decrier of human learning. When it is preferred to divine, I do decry it, but in no other respect. Am I an enemy to light because I prefer the all-reviving light of the sun to the faint glimmering light of the stars? Christ is the sun of righteousness, the light of the spiritual world. Let it then be your first and principal study to attain from him divine learning, and in subordination to it seek human learning. Let God be your teacher in things of God. Read his word, as he who was wiser than his teachers did, day and night; but read it with humility, and always begin with the excellent prayer before mentioned, " Lord open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things in thy law." The Lord will open them, and you will not only see spiritual truths clearly, but will also be more diligent in the study of useful knowledge, and will attain more of it, than a man of the best parts, trusting to the mere strength of genius, can ever attain. And one great truth the word and the Spirit of God will certainly manifest to you, and that is,

Secondly, The manner of your acceptance. To a sinner convinced of the corruption of his nature, and of the transgressions of his life, nothing can be more interesting than to know, whether God's justice, and holiness, and truth can pardon him. The fancied light of fallen nature cannot teach him this. It never did. It never led one learned heathen, Greek or Roman, to Jesus Christ. It never can: because it is blind, and with the aid of all the sciences, blind it remains, until Christ by his word and Spirit open its eyes. Then it sees, that his righteousness imputed to it by faith is the only method of being accepted as righteous before God the Father. Are you, then, seeking to be accepted in the righteousness of the Beloved? Or, are you trying to work out some righteousness of your own, which altogether or in part may render you accepted? It must never be forgotten, that justification by faith only is the grand protestant doctrine. Justification by works is downright Popery. We separated from the bishop of Rome, because he set up the merit of works in opposition to the

righteousness of God. And lo! protestant divines have fallen back again into the sink of Popery, maintaining the merit of works: as every man must do, who talks of the dignity and rectitude of human nature, of the dignity of sinful nature, and of the rectitude of fallen nature, of natural religion, of the moral sense, and of the moral scheme, and of the fitness and relation of things: for these systems are big with contradictions, unless man be able of himself to discover and to practise such duties as will render him acceptable to God. And, indeed, metaphysical writers have ascribed to blind, fallen nature both this will and power, maintaining that "every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it."—Bishop Butler's Sermons, p. 32. But what saith the scripture? Positively and expressly it speaks of man's having neither will nor power, unless they be given him of God. Being sinful in heart and life he lies under sentence of condemnation by the just law of heaven, and like an attainted rebel, he cannot do a legal act, until he be pardoned. Jesus Christ is the foundation of this pardon; and until we are accepted through his righteousness, our best works have in them the nature of sin. This is scripture, and the doctrine of our church. And can you believe a man to be a friend to either, who wants to establish the merit of works? Can he be a sound Protestant, or a good Church of England man? No, he cannot. Certainly, my brethren, you will condemn him with one voice. Away, then, with all the metaphysical rubbish, which has long obscured the scripture doctrine of acceptance; for the love of the Lord Jesus, and of his flock, for whom he shed his blood, let us hear no more of the religion of nature—of that religion which finds us and leaves us children of wrath: for the sake of your own present and eternal peace let all metaphysical systems of the religion of nature be no more your favourite studies. You have the holy scripture in your hands; whither would you go, but to it, for the words of eternal life? And does it not teach you that Jesus Christ came into the world to redeem us from the miseries of our fallen nature? And whose cause then are these men defending, who want to establish a religion founded on that nature, from which Christ came to redeem us? Good God! what an attempt is this, for Christian men, Christian ministers, ambassadors of Jesus Christ, not only to preach up the religion of nature, as if nature was not fallen, but also to make this religion of nature the foundation of revealed. What a monstrous paradox is this, natural religion the foundation of revealed? Is not this taking away Jesus Christ, the sure foundation which God hath laid, and putting the religion of nature under him as a foundation to bear him up, and thus trying to lay another foundation, which, if God be true, no man can lay. The folly, the guilt, and the danger of this proceeding are so evident upon the principles before laid down, that I shall not urge the matter farther at present, only if there be here any admirers of this metaphysical and unnatural religion, it may be useful to them to consider, what this religion can do for them, even as they understand it, which the religion of the Bible has not promised to do for them in a more full and ample manner, especially with respect to their performing an holy obedience, of which Jesus Christ is the sole foundation:—which is the third inference from what has been said.

Until you are accepted in Christ you cannot do any good works: because your whole nature is corrupt, and nothing but corrupt fruit can grow upon it. Are you then seeking for an holy nature, that in it you may perform an holy obedience? Are you then praying to God to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that his will may become yours, his word your study and delight, his Spirit your guide? And is it the desire of your soul, that you may be enabled to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments unto the end? Is Christ the foundation of this great work? And are you convinced you want grace from him every moment to carry it on? Then bring this conviction into practice. Let it operate in your lives. Where would you seek his grace, but in the means of grace? And when your persons are accepted through the righteousness of Christ imputed to you by faith, then God will accept your attendance upon these means, but not before. Then he will be found of you in them, will give his blessing to the use of them, and will enable you to abound in every good word and work to the praise of his

glory. The scripture is express, that we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We can bear no fruit until we be grafted into him the true vine. Our church is exceeding clear upon this head. To their authorities we must submit, and we shall find the happy effects of embracing them, if they dispose us to seek, until God gives us a new nature with new faculties and affections, and enables us to bring forth much fruit to the praise of the glory of his free grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: for then we shall find the present comforts of the gospel sweetly drawing us on in the way of duty, until we be at last presented perfect in Christ Jesus. Perfect and complete in him, but not in our own righteousness, we shall be presented before God the Father without spot of sin to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

To these truths every Christian assents. He lays no other foundation for his present and eternal happiness than Jesus Christ, and he is a sure foundation: for he is the author and finisher of the faith, the author to begin it here in grace, the finisher to end it, when faith shall be swallowed up in vision. As he is the author of all the works of creation, so he is the author of all the works of redemption, by whom they begin, through whom they are carried on, and in whom they will be completed: "For I am Alpha and Omega," says he, "the first and the last, which was, which is, and which is to come, the Almighty." He is the Lord God omnipotent, by whom all things were made; by his overruling providence they are supported: for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. He is the most blessed God and Saviour in the offices of a prophet to enlighten our blind eyes and to be our wisdom—of a priest to atone for the pollution and the guilt of our sins and to be our righteousness—and of a king to destroy in us the dominion of sin and to be our sanctification. And he is God the Sovereign Judge, before whose awful tribunal we must all soon appear. View Jesus Christ in these exalted stations, where he sits far above all principalities and powers, as the first and the last in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and final judgment, and then see whether you can exalt him high enough. Is not this almighty God and King far above all blessing and praise? You cannot sufficiently extol the works of creation. Survey them with a philosopher's eye, and they will appear great and wonderful in wisdom and power, affording an unexhausted subject of praise. And how then shall we be able to magnify their Maker, who is great above all his works? Especially great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God almighty, in the redemption of a sinful world: for when you glorify the Lord Jesus for this inestimable mercy, exalt him as much as you can, even yet will he far exceed; and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength and be not weary: for you can never go far enough. How should we upon earth go far enough, when the glorified spirits, who try to exalt him as much as they are able, yet fall short? He will always, to eternity he will, be above all blessing and praise. The thousands, thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, who are now standing round his throne, admiring his perfections, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, when they put forth all their strength and are not weary, still they can never go far enough. And when all the sons of God, who shouted for joy at the first creation, shall again join their voices upon the number of the elect being perfected, still he will far exceed their most exalted song. Angels and men with their highest strains of praise cannot come up to the greatness of our Lord's merit. Let the heavenly song be continued through millions of ages, yet the God whom they celebrate is infinite, and their praise therefore must fall short of the subject. The perfection of the almighty Creator, and the love of the all-merciful Redeemer, are, to the redeemed of the Lord, subjects which eternity cannot exhaust. Oh that it may be your happiness and mine to lay Jesus Christ, and him only, for the foundation of all saving knowledge, of all acceptance with the Father, and of all holy obedience, that having spent our time here by the strength of his grace in his service and to his glory, we may be admitted to see his perfections, and to be happy in the enjoyment of them, and may join our grateful hearts and voices with the blessed company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, in singing the eternal hymn of thanks and praise. So be it

Lord Jesus, to the honour of the Father, and to the glory of the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, whom the church militant now worships, and the church triumphant praises for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A PRAYER FOR FAITH.*

We are taught by thy holy apostle, O most loving Saviour, that whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and that it is impossible to please thee without faith. And therefore they that come unto thee must believe that thou art God, yea and such a God as is both able and will also abundantly reward all them that with true faith seek thee. For thy eyes, O Lord, look upon faith, and thou dost appear and show thyself unto them that have faith in thee: yea, through faith, thou being the King of glory, art married to the souls of the faithful, and makest them partakers of thy divine nature, through the wonderful working of thy blessed Spirit. Through faith so many as believe are justified, made the sons and heirs of God, and have everlasting life. By faith we obtain of God all good things, even whatsoever we ask in thy name. Seeing that faith is so precious a jewel in thy sight, that without it nothing is acceptable unto thy divine majesty; and we of our own nature cannot have this most singular treasure except thou givest it unto us from above, and dost breathe it into our hearts by thy Holy Spirit: for we of ourselves are blind, ignorant, foolish, and by no means can perceive the things that pertain to the Spirit of God; we most heartily beseech thee to take away from us all infidelity and unfaithfulness, which we received of old Adam, and to plant in us true faith and undoubted belief, that we may be thoroughly persuaded that thou art the Son of the living God, very God and very man, our alone sweet-smelling sacrifice, our alone mediator, advocate, and intercessor, our alone wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, by whom alone, and for whose sake only, thy heavenly Father is well pleased with us, our sins are remitted, grace and everlasting life are freely given unto us. Oh Lord God, suffer us not to lean to our own wisdom, nor to believe as blind flesh fancieth, nor to seek salvation where superstition dreameth; but let our faith only be grounded on thy word, and give us grace truly to believe in thee with all our heart, to put our trust in thee, to look for all good things of thee, to call upon thy blessed name in adversity, and with joyful voices and more merry hearts, to praise and magnify it in prosperity. Suffer us not to doubt, neither of God thy heavenly Father, nor of thee, God his Son, nor of God the Holy Ghost, but earnestly to believe that you being the distinct persons in the Deity, are, notwithstanding, one very God, besides whom there is no God, neither in heaven nor in earth. Grant also, that we may assuredly believe whatsoever is contained in the holy scriptures, and by no means suffer ourselves to be plucked from the verity thereof, but manly and steadfastly abide in the same, even unto death—rage world, roar devil. And this faith, oh sweet Jesus, increase thou daily in us more and more, that at the last, through thy goodness, we may be made perfect and strong men in thy holy religion, and show ourselves both before thee and the world truly faithful, by bringing forth plenty of good works unto the glory and honour of thy name: which with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest true God, worlds without end. *Amen.*

* From a treatise, entitled, the Flower of Godly Prayers, by the Rev. Thomas Becon, 1563.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW FULFILLED AND HIS DAUGHTER NOT SACRIFICED;

PROVED IN

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY, AT ST. MARY'S IN OXFORD

And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.—Judges xi. 30, 31.

THIS vow has been the subject of much ridicule; it has been represented, as rashly made and immorally executed, and the scripture itself has suffered through the character of Jephthah: the vindication of it also has been attended with so many difficulties, that an attempt to remove them must be of service to religion; and this I shall at present undertake. I shall endeavour to free it from the false interpretations which have been put upon it, and from the objections which have been made against it. But it is not the whole history I shall treat in this manner: that would be too extensive a design for a single discourse. The principal point alone shall be now considered, namely, Jephthah's fulfilling his vow, which I purpose to show he might, and did fulfil, without sacrificing his daughter.

The history has been generally understood in this sense: when the men of Gilead had placed Jephthah at their head, in order to deliver them from the children of Ammon, he gathered together his army, and before he begun the battle he vowed a vow unto the Lord, and promised, that if God would prosper him, he would sacrifice whatever should first meet him on his return. Upon this he begins the attack, and the Lord delivered the Ammonites into his hands, so that he slew them with very great slaughter. By this success he became obliged to a strict observance of his vow; and it unfortunately so happened, that as he was returning to his house in peace, his only daughter, not knowing of his vow, came out with joy to meet him. Hereby she became, according to his vow, the person to be sacrificed, and he did offer her up for a burnt-offering.

This is the common interpretation of Jephthah's vow. It has generally been supposed that his daugher was sacrificed. An action so contrary to the laws of God and man, and so inconsistent with the good character which St. Paul has given of Jephthah's faith, that it is not easy to conceive, how it came to pass, that such an opinion was ever entertained at all, much less how it became so general; especially as no historical passage of scripture has laid more open to the wanton jests of the infidel, or is more difficult to be explained by the sober believer. From these difficulties which the history now labours under, I trust, I shall be able to free it by showing;

I. That the opinion of her being sacrificed is exposed to so many solid objections, that it is not defensible, and

II. By proving from the history itself, that she was not sacrificed.

1. And the first objection against the history's being explained in the common manner is this, that Jephthah could not have sacrificed his daughter, though he had vowed to do it; because human sacrifices were absolutely forbidden by the law of Moses. And Jephthah knew this: he did not only live in obedience to the law, but was also at that time the judge of it. And would he act contrary to his knowledge? Could he live in obedience to the law, and yet

dispense with the breach of one duty, which Moses had made indispensable? Or what an unjust judge would he be, who should undertake to punish the offences of others, while he himself was a most notorious offender! These circumstances, indeed, prove, rather that he ought not to have done it, than that he did it not. But,

2. When we consider further, that the same Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah at the making his vow, as was upon Moses at the writing of the law; this clearly proves that he did it not: for the Spirit of the Lord could not give one law by Moses, and another opposite to it by Jephthah—he could not, whilst the first was still in force, direct any person to transgress it—the infallible Spirit of God cannot contradict himself—nor can human sacrifices be both lawful and unlawful at the same time—so that if the same Spirit, which spake in Moses, directed Jephthah (as the text expressly says he did) in making his vow; then no doubt he did not sacrifice his daughter. But,

3. Further, supposing he had offered her up, and pretended to be directed by the Spirit of God, yet how came it to pass that he was never punished? To offer human sacrifices was made a capital crime by the law, and yet it is not so much as hinted, that he suffered death for what he did; nay, where does it appear that he was ever called to an account for it? And yet there was something so particular in the offence, in the person of the offender, and in the time when he offended, that then the Jewish state ought not to have overlooked it; and God, who then presided over it, was in equity bound not to spare such an offender. And if Jephthah under these circumstances was not punished, it is at least probable, that he did not deserve punishment, which yet he must have deserved, if he had sacrificed his daughter. And,

4. These circumstances are further confirmed from the nature of the action, which was certainly immoral, and such therefore as Jephthah did not. There s nothing in which the general sense of mankind is more agreed, than that every man's life is his own property; this general sense arises from the natural principle of self-preservation, it comes confirmed to us by the laws of all free nations, and is further strengthened by the laws of God. And that action which should break through all these laws must be immoral. But though the action be immoral, yet perhaps it may be said, was Jephthah such a man as would not do an immoral action? St. Paul has here provided us with an answer which fully clears up the character of Jephthah in this particular: for the most considerable circumstance in the life of this eminent judge, was the history before us: this was the most material action recorded of him in scripture, and which placed his character in the most conspicuous light. Now St. Paul could not form a judgment of his life and character without considering this his principal transaction; and in the 11th chapter to the Hebrews, where he is celebrating the praises of those ancient worthies who did such great and excellent acts though faith, among others he mentions Jephthah, and the time, he says, would fail if he should set about praising him and the other worthies as they deserved. Such a commendation from an apostle was the highest honour which could be conferred: for praise is ever judged of according to those who give it, and that is the greatest praise which is given by them who are themselves the most praiseworthy. What an high honour then was it to be commended by a St. Paul! Certainly there could be nothing immoral in the character of Jephthah whom he thus commended, and yet the principal point of view in which St. Paul considered him, that indeed which gives us the strongest proof of his faith, was the making his vow; which if he had fulfilled by sacrificing his daughter, it must be confessed was an immoral action. And, therefore, if Jephthah could not sacrifice his daughter without breaking through all those moral laws of God and man, which say, "Thou shalt not kill;" and if St. Paul, when he considered him in this light, could not have recommended him had the action been immoral: then it is evident, that Jephthah did nothing immoral in fulfilling his vow, and consequently did not sacrifice his daughter. And,

5. Besides, when he made his vow, he promised to fulfil it upon condition that God would prosper him in the undertaking he had in hand; and can it be supposed but that Jephthah would word his vow with so much caution, as not to be

obliged by it to do an immoral action? There are still extant proofs enow of his great abilities as well as faith, which clearly evince, that he was far from being either rash or weak, and yet he must have been both to a very great degree, if he could first have vowed to sacrifice his daughter, or afterwards thought himself obliged to do it, because God had given him success: in either of these respects he must have acted out of character; in the first, without his usual prudence, for which he is recommended; in the latter without his faith, for which he is celebrated. But still,

6. Whatever Jephthah was, yet God is perfect; and how shall we vindicate the divine perfections, if he gave success to those means, which led directly to an immoral end? The Spirit of God was upon Jephthah, when he made his vow—the hand of God enabled him to succeed—and it was this success which obliged him to perform his vow. In these instances he was certainly under the divine guidance. And was it of God that he vowed to sacrifice his daughter, or could God in any sense be the means of such a sacrifice? These things cannot be. Far be such proceedings from the All-perfect. His goodness, justice, veracity, nay, every divine attribute, forbid us to think of it. So that, if the perfections of God will not suffer him to countenance an immoral action, and if he did countenance Jephthah's vow by assisting him with his Holy Spirit, and by giving him success, then certainly the thing he vowed was not immoral, and of course he did not sacrifice his daughter.

Out of many more objections that might be urged, let these suffice at present, as it fully appears from them, that the account commonly given is not rational, is inconsistent with the truth of scripture, and contrary to the history itself. Let us then seek out for some other explanation, which may be fairly deduced from the words themselves, may be agreeable to the reason of the thing, and consistent with the good character St. Paul hath given us of Jephthah; and such an interpretation I shall first lay down, and afterwards endeavour to establish, in order to,

II. Prove from the history itself, that he did not sacrifice his daughter.

The matter of fact was this: when the children of Israel were in great distress by the invasion of the Ammonites, and had no captain who might lead them out to battle, the Lord raised up Jephthah to be their deliverer; and, as it was common in such cases during the era of the judges, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him to enable him to execute his office. And when he entered upon it, he made a vow unto the Lord, "That upon condition of success, whatever should meet him at his doors when he returned in peace, should EITHER be the Lord's, OR offered up for a burnt-offering." This was the vow; and if it consists of two distinct sentences, as I shall presently show it does, then Jephthah will be found to have worded it with so much caution, that he lay under no obligation to sacrifice his daughter. When he returned and met his only child, the history represents him under great perplexity; but this did not arise from his concern to offer her up: there were other reasons. The text itself tells us, that it was losing all hopes of descendants, losing the inheritance, which in default of heirs went to the nearest kinsman, and many other privileges which then subsisted among the Jews, but have now ceased among us, that occasioned his grief: for we find, "that she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months that she returned unto her father, who did with her ACCORDING TO HIS VOW WHICH HE HAD VOWED;" *i. e.* according to the FIRST PART of the vow, he dedicated her unto the Lord, and in consequence of such dedication she continued the remainder of her life a virgin: for, AFTER the vow had been fulfilled, the text observes, "She knew no man." Hereby the purpose of the vow was answered; from the time that she was dedicated unto the Lord, she continued to the end of her days in an unmarried state: because as the vow happened to fall upon her while she was in that state, she could not change it without causing her father to break his vow. This was the fact: whether it can be justified or not, is another question, which no ways concerns my present argument. It is sufficient for my purpose, that the text clearly asserts, she was, according to the words of the vow, to be dedicated to the Lord—was dedicated—at the time of dedication

was a virgin—continued so some years afterwards—and therefore continued so till her death.

This was, indeed, a singular case: the design of it was so uncommon, the reasons to justify it so extraordinary, that no precedents can be drawn from hence for recluses of any kind; it might easily be shown to be a confutation rather of such practices, if that were within the design of my present argument. But I waive this, and proceed to observe, that it was in her so remarkable an instance of filial piety, so evident a proof of her public-spiritedness, and love of her country; and these virtues were in her so eminent, in her condition so illustrious, that the nation, in gratitude to her, made it a law, so long as she lived, "for the daughters of Israel to go yearly to MAKE PRESENTS to the daughter of Jephthah, four days in the year," And here certainly I need not point out the absurdity of going year after year to make presents to a dead person, though the propriety of making them to one in her state must be manifest to every one.

This is the true interpretation of the history; and it is free from all the objections to which the common opinion is exposed. It only remains, that I support it by sound arguments; and the following, I trust, will appear to every one satisfactory. And,

1. The first is taken from the history not mentioning her being sacrificed; and when the history is thus silent, from whence can it be proved that she was sacrificed? If there be any proof, it must be either in the words of the vow, or in the fulfilling it; but there is no proof in them: for there is nothing more said in the latter, than that "he did with her ACCORDING TO HIS VOW."—So that here we are referred to the words of the vow, to know what it was he did with her; and all that Jephthah vowed was—"If the Lord would give him success, whatever met him on his return in peace, should EITHER be the Lord's, OR he would offer it up for a burnt offering." Here it is plain what he promised in these words consists of two parts: for what met him and was to be dedicated to the Lord, was one thing; but what met him and was to be sacrificed, was another: and it is certain these two things are distinct. Though every thing sacrificed was dedicated to the Lord, yet every thing dedicated to the Lord was not sacrificed. The incense—aromatics—vestments—and all the apparatus of the temple were dedicated to the Lord; but yet none of them were sacrificed. The vow then consists of two senses, which mean two different things, and which do not follow in consequence—"whatever meets me shall be the Lord's, AND I will sacrifice it:" but the true construction is, "It shall be the Lord's, OR I will sacrifice it;" for the particle used in the original, has the sense of OR, and the translators have so often rendered it thus, and have mentioned it even here in the margin of the bible, that no one can object to its being so interpreted in this place, where the whole history fixes it to this sense. As the vow then consists of two distinct parts, it would be kept by observing either of them—and as one thing Jephthah promised mentions nothing about sacrificing his daughter—and as when he fulfilled what he had promised, it is only said, "he did with her according to his vow," then it is evident that the history is quite silent about her being sacrificed; which as clearly proves, as any negative argument can, that she was not sacrificed. But,

2. This is still further evident from hence, that though Jephthah had vowed to sacrifice whatever creature should first meet him, yet if a creature had met him which the law forbade to be offered up, it is certain he could not have offered it; and how then could he his daughter? If an unclean creature had first met him, would he have thought himself obliged by his vow to offer it up, when God had forbidden it? Certainly he would not. No vow can lay a man under any obligation to transgress the laws of God.

What then was to be done in this case? The law itself had provided a remedy. As the unclean creature could not be sacrificed, it was to be ransomed, and another allowed of for sacrifice was to offered up in its stead: and why ought not this rule to take place in the case of Jephthah? The same law, which forbade offering up an unclean creature, forbade human sacrifices. If a vow should fall upon an unclean creature, it was to be ransomed—if it should fall upon a human creature, it was also to be ransomed—and God promised to accept of one in place of the

other. As I lay great stress upon this argument, and would have it carefully considered, I must refer to the 27th chapter of Leviticus, where this point is fully treated of. Now Jephthah must have read this chapter. He could not but know that this was the rule prescribed in the law of Moses, and therefore though he had vowed to sacrifice whatever creature should first meet him, yet he was not obliged by this vow to sacrifice his daughter; because by the law she was to be ransomed: and this eminent judge could not be ignorant, that it was lawful to ransom her, and absolutely unlawful not to do it. So that, put the case either way, the point is clear—either her father did include her in his vow, or he did not: if he did, then she was to be ransomed; and if he did not, then she could not be sacrificed. And therefore this is another strong negative argument that she was not made a burnt-offering. But

3. The evidence does not rest here. There are other arguments, which clearly prove that she was alive after her father had fulfilled his vow, and therefore of course she could not be sacrificed: for the sacred historian observes, as a consequence of the vow's being fulfilled—as what followed upon her entering into it, that she continued a virgin all the rest of her life—"Her father did with her according to his vow: AND SHE KNEW NO MAN." But when? After she was sacrificed? No. This remark would have been absurd, when she was dead; whereas being a description of her after the vow was fulfilled, it must describe some state or condition she was in, even after the completion of the vow and in consequence of it—and this was her being or continuing afterwards a virgin. Jephthah, as I before observed, was not obliged by his vow to sacrifice her; his vow would be kept by dedicating her to the Lord—he did dedicate her: after she was dedicated, the sacred historian remarks, that she remained a virgin. Can any thing be more plain or self-evident than that she, who remained a virgin, was also alive? Could she with any propriety be said to be the one without being the other? Nay, if he had written purposely to prove her alive, could he have brought any stronger proof than this—"that from the day of her dedication she continued a virgin?" This, therefore, I look upon as a positive argument, taken from the history itself, for her not having been sacrificed. But

4. The history proceeds further, and asserts that she was alive at least some years after the vow was fulfilled. The words are—"And it was a LAW in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly (to lament as it is rendered, or as it is in the original) to MAKE PRESENTS to the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year." How the translators happened to mistake this passage, is not easily to be conceived: for the word, which they here render lament, and which signifies to make presents, they have given the true idea of, in every passage but this and another. They have translated it by these three words, reward, hire, gift. The use of it is very remarkable in the lxviiith Psalm, 18th verse; "Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received GIFTS for men." Here they have rendered the same word GIFTS, which they have in the passage above made to signify lament. And gifts it does signify—I have their own usage and authority to say it does—and, what is more, the authority of all the lexicographers. To make presents is, therefore, the meaning of it in this place; and when these presents were made to her, she could not be dead. When the daughters of Israel went according to the laws of the land four days in a year to visit her, she must be alive. She was a recluse dedicated—therefore alive. The nature of the presents which they carried, shows that she was alive. The intention of making them, proves as much. So does the setting apart four days in a year to make them. The very thing speaks itself—she received these presents—therefore was not dead: and besides, by the law of Moses it was a crime to make them to the dead. And further, it was provided by a law, that these presents should be made her yearly; but this law was contrary to the law of Moses, if she had been dead: and yet no censure is passed upon it; therefore she was living. And when these circumstances are considered together, what further evidence would any person require than this? That she could not be dead, who was visited four days in every year by the daughters of Israel, and had then such presents made her as none could receive but one who was living.

5. And what greatly strengthens all these arguments, what demonstrates that

she was alive long after the vow was fulfilled, is a proof taken from the sacred historian's observing, "that she RECEIVED these presents. Four days in every year the daughters of Israel made their presents TO the daughter of Jephthah"—they made them for HER USE AND BENEFIT: the particle used in the original does not only denote the dative case TO—TO the daughter of Jephthah; but frequently expresses something further. When spoken of two things, where one is said to act upon the other, it denotes, that one was the cause of the other, and produced whatever action or condition the writer was then treating of; in this sense it is most elegantly used in the first chapter of Genesis. When spoken of persons, where one is doing something to another, it often denotes that one did the action for the use and benefit of the other. This is a well-known idiom of the sacred tongue; and the literal sense of the word, as well as the scope of the history, require that in the passage before us it should be thus understood. The phrase therefore expresses that the daughters of Israel made their presents "for the use and benefit of Jephthah's daughter." For the use of one who was sacrificed? For the benefit of one who was dead? Could this possibly be? Certainly there can be no greater absurdity. The dead are out of the reach of our good offices: but she shared in them—presents were made TO her, therefore she must have received them—they were made for her use and benefit, therefore she was sensible of them. She received them and was sensible of them for some years after the vow was fulfilled, therefore was for some years after alive, and of course was not sacrificed. If this argument required any thing to add to its clearness and conviction, I might support it by other authorities; but it seems to me undeniably conclusive. I shall only mention by way of illustration, two historical passages of heathen writers, in the grand lineaments of which there is so great a resemblance of the present history, that I doubt not they took their origin from hence: I mean the vows of Agamemnon and Idomeneus. Their cases were almost the same as Jephthah's. A parallel might easily be drawn between them to show this; and if it could be proved (with some degree of probability I think it might) that both of them took their rise from his history, it would strengthen the interpretation I have now given of it: because if these were borrowed from it, and tradition had preserved perfect the chief marks of likeness, this would be a probable reason that Jephthah's daughter was not sacrificed. Neither of their daughters were offered up, though they were in parallel circumstances with his, and it is likely the tradition of her being saved was the foundation of their histories being so represented. And,

What tends strongly to confirm the opinion, that these histories were derived from Jephthah's vow, is an instance of the same sort of presents being offered to certain recluses in the heathen world: and it will be very difficult to assign any satisfactory reasons for the origin of such a ceremony, unless we trace it up to the days of Jephthah. It was in all appearance a corruption of his history. Men retained the knowledge of the fact, after they had forgot the reasons upon which he acted, and this led them to ingraft upon it numerous errors. The practice of dedicating recluses without any obligation or necessity, must, I think, have had its original from hence. It took its rise from a gross mistake of this history. It could not come into the heathen world from reason—it was unreasonable; nor from nature—it was unnatural: there must have been some authority which at first seemed to countenance such a practice; and by length of time, and the corruptions of mankind, the case of Jephthah might be so much mistaken, as to be made a precedent for that very error, of which it is a most clear confutation. Now if this custom among the heathens came from Jephthah, it will greatly establish the interpretation of the text. This it will prove at least, that they who are dedicated, were not sacrificed; and that they who received certain presents by virtue of such dedication, were indisputably alive. The heathens made the same presents to their recluses, as the daughters of Israel did in the case before us. This is abundantly evident from their own writers. And for what reason should they thus agree in this ceremony, unless it had been derived from one common cause? And so far as this is probable, it must be admitted, that if the heathens offered these presents to none but them who were alive, then she who received the same presents was also alive.

I might have been more copious upon these arguments, but they seemed to me

so plain and conclusive, that they needed not be further insisted on: and now the case hath been fairly stated, I leave it to every impartial man to determine on which side the truth prevails. The common received opinion is, that Jephthah, according to his vow, sacrificed his daughter; but this opinion I showed was not defensible: because human sacrifices were forbidden by the law of Moses, and Jephthah did not transgress this law: for he was directed by the Spirit of God in making his vow—he was never punished for it—he is commended for it by St. Paul—and had success in consequence of it. And if the common opinion cannot be supported against these objections, much less against the arguments brought to prove that she was not sacrificed—the historian has neither included her in the vow, nor in the fulfilling it—and if she had been included, the law had provided a ransom, whereby the vow would be kept, and she not made a burnt-offering. From these negative arguments I endeavoured to establish the true interpretation, which was settled beyond all doubt from certain passages in the history, which gave her the attributes of a living person some years after her father had fulfilled his vow; and I think no truth can be more evident than this, that she could not be sacrificed and dead, who still had the attributes of a living person.

Thus is the character of Jephthah vindicated, and neither rashness nor immorality entered into the making of his vow, or the fulfilling of it: but this eminent judge appears to be distinguished for his faith and other virtues. The scripture also is cleared in this particular, and reconciled to reason and common sense; and this historical passage was recorded, as all scripture was, "that the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work."

THE PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES;

INTERPRETED IN

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT ST. OLAVE'S, SOUTHWARK, OCTOBER 24TH, 1756.

And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trepasses.—Col. ii. 13.

O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.—Ezek. xxxvii. 4.

All our ideas of spiritual objects are comparative, taken from matter, and carried up to spirit. In our present state we have no knowledge but what is first sensible, but what comes into the mind from some of the senses, and is borrowed from objects upon which they can make their observation. This is at present a received truth among the learned. Happy for us that it is received, because scripture knowledge is conveyed in this manner. God accommodates his instruction to our capacities: he makes use of outward and sensible objects to explain inward and spiritual: he applies the book of nature to illustrate the book of grace, thus bringing heavenly things down to the level of our understandings, and setting them (as it were) before our eyes by their natural pictures and just similitudes.

The very language of the Old Testament is of this nature. Every word stands for some sensible object, and from thence raises the idea of some correspondent spiritual object. Since this is the genius of the Hebrew tongue, it is not to be wondered, that it should so much abound with what some call figures and metaphors; these are not the ornaments of language or beauties of diction, as it hath been supposed, but they are of the essence of the sacred tongue: neither is this method of using natural objects to give us ideas of spiritual the Oriental way of writing, as we have been told, as if it delighted in bold figures and lofty meta-

phors; but it is the method of instruction, which man's present state renders necessary. While we are here in the body, we have no means of discovering spiritual objects but by divine teaching. God informs us, that such an object in the natural world stands for, and is the perfect representation of, such an object in the spiritual world; and this kind of information he has given us in every Hebrew word: like a parable, it teaches and illustrates heavenly things under the expressive figures of earthly. And while men were accustomed to this method of instruction by the very nature of their language, one might expect it would run also into their compositions; which we find from fact that it has. The Old Testament, the prophetical writings especially, abound with natural images; and the great Prophet of the New Testament made such use of them, that without a parable spake he not unto the people. Wherever he was, the objects before him gave him an opportunity to spiritualize them; and this application of material things to illustrate spiritual, is what the scripture calls a parable. Of this kind are the words of the text. They are a parable in which the all-wise Spirit teaches us the things of God, by comparing them to material and outward objects. The lesson he would teach us is of eternal moment; and may the Lord God take the veil off all your hearts while I am explaining this part of the Old Testament. May he give you to understand it, and to profit from it, and to experience the truth of the whole parable in your own souls.

The prophet gives us the literal sense in these words. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones. And caused me to pass by them round about, and behold there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, son of man, Can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. And again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, unto these bones, behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied, as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army."

Now what instruction are we to receive from this scripture? It was certainly applicable to the state of the Jewish church, which was then deprived of all its ordinances. It was carried away captive into Babylon, where it had neither a temple nor the presence of God, neither an officiating priest, nor a sacrifice, and was as void of spiritual life as these dry bones were of animal life. To the church in this state the application is made—God himself makes this use of it. "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts; therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land, then ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord."

In this sense the scripture was then fulfilled, when God did bring the Jews from their graves; he placed them in their own land, and restored the life of their civil and ecclesiastical policy. He performed what he had spoken, and they knew that he was the Lord their God. But is this the full sense and meaning of the parable? Are we to understand nothing more by it, than this

outward completion? Are we to rest here? By no means. It is of more general use and instruction. We may all receive profit from it, as I hope the following reasons will convince you. And

First, We are assured by the apostle, that "no scripture is of private interpretation." It was all written for the general use of the church of Christ, in all times and circumstances, therefore we may not yet rest in the private interpretation of this parable, applicable to the Jewish church in the Babylonish bondage, but we must look out for a more extensive sense, applicable to the catholic church of Christ: For,

Secondly, we otherwise get no farther than the literal sense. It was a matter of fact, that God did bring the Jews after seventy years' bondage up again to their own land. This is the letter of the parable. But the apostle forbids us to rest here. We must seek for the spiritual sense; "Because the letter," he says, "killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." And that we may and must attain the spiritual, which is the life-giving sense, he expressly teaches us when he declares

Thirdly, That God's outward dealings with the Jewish church were a type and figure of his spiritual dealings with the Christian church. For thus he says, 1 Cor. x. 11, "That all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition." Among the rest, what happened to them in the Babylonish captivity was for an example to us, and this parable treating of their state under it, and of their deliverance from it, was written for our admonition, and is to have its completion in us spiritually, as it had in them bodily.

These arguments may suffice to prove, that this parable cannot be of a private interpretation. It has a spiritual as well as a literal sense, which belongs to us, which is to set before us an example, that we are to follow, and from which we are to receive admonition and instruction to our souls. And it sets before our eyes some of the great truths of the gospel in a most striking light. We have here an affecting representation of our lost and dead state, while we are in the bondage of sin, and of our happy revival to newness of life, when we are born again of the Spirit of God. These are the great outlines of the parable, which may the divine grace deeply impress upon all your hearts, while I am giving you a short paraphrase upon the words, and then applying them, as God shall enable me, to each of your consciences.

The prophet begins with informing us, that it was the eternal Spirit who showed him this vision. "The hand of the Lord (the power of Jehovah) was upon me, and carried me in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones," even in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death, where I saw sin and corruption reigning, and where I beheld the souls of men as dead in trespasses and sins, as dead to God and to the things of spiritual and divine life, as dry and dead bones are to the offices of animal life. When the scripture speaks thus of the death of the soul, the idea is evidently taken from the death of the body; for as the body, when it dies, ceases to be actuated by the natural agents which carry on animal life; so the soul when it dies, ceases to be actuated by the divine agents which carry on spiritual life. But this spiritual death does not imply any dissolution or absolute insensibility; it only signifies, that the sinful soul is cut off from all communion with God, who is the fountain of life; it is alienated from the life of God, and has lost its life of happiness in him, being now dead to his grace, as it may, ere long, be dead to his glory. And what then could be a more proper representation of a soul thus dead in sin, than a body dead in the grave? And what could paint in stronger colours the exceeding deadness of a sinful soul, than the exceeding dryness of the bones of a dead body? Under the death of the outward man the prophet was made to see the death of the inward man. The Spirit of the Lord gave him a full view of these souls dead in sin: "for he caused me," says he, "to pass by them round about, to go all around them, and behold there were very many upon the face of the valley, and lo they were very dry:" their number was very great, and their condition was very dead; they had so long, so entirely lost all spiritual life, that the bones of dead men, from which the flesh is worn quite off, and which are become exceeding dry,

were not farther removed from life, than the souls thus dead in trespasses and sins. After the prophet had gone all round them, "The Lord said unto him, Son of man, can these bones live? Is there any power that is able to quicken them to newness of life? And I answered, O Lord God, Thou knowest"—Thou only knowest what power is requisite to raise a soul dead in sin. All the powers in nature I am certain cannot do it. They can no more give life to a dead soul, than they can raise the bones of a dead man to life. Although this was the Prophet's opinion, yet the Lord said unto him, "Prophesy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded." He did not consult carnal reason, which would have showed him the absurdity of doing what God commanded; but he instantly obeyed, and began preaching to the dry bones, and calling upon them to hear the word of the Lord. Would not some of you, my brethren, have taken him to be quite disordered in his head, if you had seen him preaching in a churchyard to a great number of dead dry bones? Would you not have thought Ezekiel as mad as any of our modern enthusiasts? For men reproach and ridicule the ministers of the gospel for doing the very same thing that he did. We are reckoned visionaries and madmen, and what not, because, after his example, we preach the word of the Lord to the dead. When we tell sinners that they are all dead, dead to God, dead to grace, and may soon die to glory; and when we call upon them in the name of the Lord to awake from the dead sleep of sin, that Christ may give them life, then they mock and ridicule. The same men would have made as great a jest of the prophet, if they had seen him preaching to a congregation of dry bones. But he preached as he was commanded, and so do we. Lord, grant the success may be the same. The blessed Jesus sends us to preach the word to dry bones, and we obey. He sends us out in his name, with his commission, and in his strength, and promises to be with us by his Spirit. We should be enthusiasts indeed, if we thought ourselves able to awaken one dead sinner without the effectual working of his power. We know that it is he who worketh in us and by us, for without him we can do nothing; and therefore let men reproach us for doing his work, we will go on, pitying, and praying for them, and the more they reproach us, the more we will preach, and the more earnestly, to the dead in sin; and who knows but as the work is God's, he may speak to the inward ears of the soul, while we are speaking to the outward ears of the body, and bid the sinner awake and live. Glory be to his holy name, for that he often accompanies this foolishness of preaching with his divine power. Thanks be to him for setting his seal to the truth of our words, by awakening the dead through our weak ministry. Oh that his good Spirit may now seal the word, and by his blessing fulfil what follows in the parable—"So I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied there was a noise," in the Hebrew, a voice, namely, the voice of God. The prophet was speaking; and to say that there was a voice while he was speaking, would be mere tautology, and unmeaning repetition, if we apply it to him. But if while he spake, the power of the Lord was present, then the driest bones would hear; and if while we address ourselves to the outward ears, the voice of God carries the sound at the same time to the heart, then even the dead hear this almighty voice, and awake, and see their guilt and danger, and begin to be concerned about their salvation. When the Spirit of God speaks conviction to the heart, these effects always follow, and it is evident the voice was his from what is mentioned next in the parable; "for as I prophesied there was a voice, and behold, a shaking"—behold, a matter worthy of the closest attention, there was a great shaking among the dry bones, even as it were an earthquake among them: for the word rendered shaking is the scripture term for an earthquake. And behold, there is as great a shaking in the soul of the sinner when he is awakened and convinced of sin. He that has been dead in sin, helpless and lost for ever in himself, then begins to quake and tremble: he sees the corruption of his nature —odious and abominable altogether: he sees his life was one continued scene of open injury to God, and dishonour to his law: looking back, he beholds nothing

but guilt; looking forward, he beholds nothing but everlasting destruction: upon which fear and a horrible dread overwhelm him. The Holy Spirit sets home these convictions upon the conscience. He gives it such a sight of the guilt and danger of sin, that the sinner sees he cannot save himself. In this distress he continues, until the remainder of the parable be fulfilled in him: for we read, that after the shaking—"The bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them." Here is in the letter of the parable the outside and shape of man—a body, but it is inanimate—there is no life in it. So in the spiritual sense, if the soul should rest in the externals of religion, and sit down content with any thing short of the vital influence of the Holy Spirit, there is no life in it. Whatever may promise to animate it, still it will remain dead. Good works, ordinances, orthodoxy, are but the letter that killeth, unless the Spirit that giveth life be in them. You may belong to the best constituted church upon earth, which has sound articles and creeds like strong bones and sinews, and flesh upon them, and which has a good liturgy, and decent public worship like a fair skin to cover all; and yet in this communion your soul may be dead: for these external privileges cannot give the breath of life to the soul. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," the flesh (the externals of religion) profiteth nothing unless the Spirit animate them, as we learn from the next words in the parable. "Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Glory be to God for daily fulfilling this part of the parable. His good Spirit daily awakens poor dead sinners, and puts the breath of divine life into them; and this he does by the weakest means, even by the foolishness of preaching, that it may appear the power comes from him, and that all the glory may return to him. He sends us out to preach, bids us call to the dead—we do as we are commanded; but we know that we could no more raise a dead soul from the grave of sin, than we could raise a dead body from the grave of corruption. We speak our Lord's words, and he blesses them. He sends his grace along with them, and the dead hear his voice. They awake. They see their guilt and their danger: at the sight of which their hearts sink within them—they find themselves perishing—and a great trembling and violent shaking seizes them. Fear is on every side. No way is left to escape, but to fly to the Saviour of sinners. And as soon as they turn to him, he receives them gladly. He sends the Holy Spirit (the dearest pledge of his love) to give them evidence of their new birth unto righteousness, and to assure them of their justification to life. Then they live unto God—and "stand up upon their feet," being enabled to go forward in the ways of holiness—"An exceeding great army,"—an innumerable multitude, which no man could number, and they all hold swords, being expert in war, a great army of the faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ fighting their way to a crown of righteousness, against all the opposition of sin and Satan, of the world and the flesh, and never quitting the field of battle, until the Captain of their salvation place the never-fading crown upon their heads.

This is, I think, the spiritual sense of the parable. We have in it, a description of man in his natural state as dead in trespasses and sins—in his awakened state as unable to do any thing to raise himself from the death of sin to newness of life—and in his justified state, as raised to spiritual and divine life by Christ, who is the life of the world, and by the effectual working of his good Spirit. These great truths are beautifully painted in the parable. It sets them before our eyes in a very affecting manner. And I hope every one of you has been properly affected according to the view he has had of the state of his soul. But whatever impression has been made, I cannot leave the subject, without making some short practical remarks, and may the almighty Spirit apply them to the necessities of those who are concerned in them.

And first, I have a word to the dry bones, to the dead in sin. We are all in this state by nature—dead in trespasses and sins—dead to God and to the things of God. If you believe the scripture you cannot deny this. It describes your

souls to be as incapable of performing any of the offices of spiritual life as the dry bones of a dead body are of performing the offices of animal life. If God and his word be true, this is the condition of every one of us by nature, and it is the first work of grace to convince us of it. When the Holy Spirit begins to move in the sinner's heart, he convinces him of his lost and helpless state, and he sees and finds that without Christ he can do nothing. And can every one of you say from his own experience—I have had this conviction. If you had, then one step is taken—may he who hath begun, carry on the work, until he make you living members of Christ's mystical body! But if you were never yet convinced of your being by nature dead in trespasses and sins, then you are still alienated from the life of God; for you will not seek life from him, until you be convinced of your want of it. As transgressors, his holy law condemns you to death. The solemn sentence is passed, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Did you never read this sentence as standing out against yourself? Have you never had any sense of the exquisite misery of being eternally separated from God the fountain of life? Have you no sense of it at present, no thought, no concern about being alienated in body and soul, and to all eternity, from God and his glory? O almighty Saviour, if there be any persons here present in this state, speak to the dry bones. They can hear no voice but thine. Oh let the all-reviving sound, which Lazarus' dead body heard, now be heard in every dead heart. Now Lord Jesus prove thyself to be the resurrection and the life. Call to every unawakened soul in this congregation, and say, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." O Almighty God and Saviour, send these words home to every dead sinner, that he may awake and be concerned for his salvation, and thereby may follow me in my second remark.

While the prophet was preaching, the voice of God spake to the heart, while he spake to the outward ears, and "behold there was a great shaking." The sinner shook and trembled for fear. The Lord showed him his former dead state, and his present danger, and at the sight of both an horrible dread overwhelmed him. He beheld the perfect purity and spirituality of the divine law—he saw the vile and loathsome nature of sin—he beheld the holiness, and truth, and justice of God, armed with almighty power and ready to destroy him. Conscience witnessed against him, and haunted him with its horrors night and day. He found that hell was his desert, and he saw no way open to escape it. However hardened and obdurate he had been before, yet all these circumstances put together set him a shaking and trembling. Had he been in an earthquake, when the ground heaved and tossed with such violent shocks, that he could not stand upon it, and had he seen it opening its mouth in many a hideous crack, and swallowing up multitudes all around him, he could not have shaked and trembled more. His soul fainted within him; and he had not a ray of hope left, unless God would be pleased to stretch out his omnipotent arm, and to save him from going down to the pit of destruction.

And can every one of you, my brethren, remember when this was your case? If you were never in any distress less or more, at the sight of your sinfulness and misery—Oh consider, I beseech you, your danger. You are still secure in sin, yea dead in trespasses and sins. When the Holy Spirit is come to awaken your soul, his first work is to convince you of sin, and if he has not begun this work—fancy yourself to be alive—reform your outward life—become civil, and moral, and honest, yet you have not taken one step in the divine life; if you have never been deeply convinced of sin, you have not been stirred up nor shaken from the lees—your poor soul is still dead to the grace of God, and unless you be convinced of sin it will, ere long, be dead to his glory. But if you have been awakened, and convinced of sin, then the parable is so far happily fulfilled in you. There has been a shaking among the dry bones. They have been trembling and quaking, and with great reason. Sinners while under conviction, have every thing to fear that is terrible. They have an offended God set in battle array against them, a broken law thundering out its curses upon their guilty heads, conscience owning the guilt, the devil ready to torment, and hell open to receive them: and if the prospect of these things be not terrible, what is? Am I now speaking to any of you, who says, I am acquainted with these terrors

—I have been made to see my sinfulness and my danger, and I find my helpless lost condition—dangers so surround me on every side, that I know not whither to turn myself. Is this the language of thine heart? Art thou indeed shaken from all trust and confidence in self? Then turn thee to the blessed Jesus. He is a Saviour for thee. Such as thou art he came to save—such poor, lost and ruined sinners. Wait on him. Be found in the ways of his ordinances, and he will supply all thy wants. He will give thee freely out of his fulness, grace for grace, and glory to crown all his graces.

But, methinks I hear some afflicted soul reply—I have been waiting upon the Lord Jesus long, but have found no comfort. It may be so. But who is to blame? May you not have sought comfort in a wrong manner, by placing religion in the form instead of the power, according to what is described in the third part of the parable, where we have all the parts of an human body, but for want of breath there was no life in them; and this was written to show, that you are not to stop short of Christ and his comforts by resting in externals. You are not to be content with the form and the outside of religion, without the life and spirit of it. And herein the parable condemns those persons, who upon their being first brought under some concern about their souls, are apt to trust in duties, instead of going to Christ. They set about reforming their outward behaviour, go to church, say their prayers, read the scriptures, give alms, attend constantly at the sacrament—supposing that these outward things can give life to the soul: they rest in them, as of themselves sufficient and meritorious, which is setting them up against our Saviour, and resting in them as saviours, whereas Christ alone has life to give to the dead in sin. "I am the life," says he. Whosoever is not united to him by faith, has no true spiritual life in him, as he found, who had more duties to depend upon than any of us have, and yet he counted them but dross and dung that he might win Christ. "The life which I now live in the flesh," says the blessed apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God;" it is a spiritual life derived from the Son of God, and received from him by faith, which is the breath of life in the justified soul, inspired into it by the Holy Spirit, as the last part of the parable proves. The dry bones had come together, the sinews and flesh had grown up upon them, the skin was spread over all—here were all the parts of an human body, but there was no life, until the Spirit of the Lord put breath into them, and they lived, and stood up. It is the very same case with the sinful soul. Nothing can give it life but the Spirit of God. He is to the soul what breath is to the body. He is so much the breath of life, that in the Old Testament and the New the same word which stands for the breath that supports the life of the body, stands for the Holy Spirit, who supports the life of the soul. The air that we breathe, and the Holy Spirit, have but one name in scripture. And therefore as the body is not alive until it breathes, so neither is the soul alive to God until the Holy Spirit infuse into it the breath of life. And as the body is alive only so long as it breathes, in like manner the soul lives to God only so long as the Holy Spirit breathes in it. Let his influence stop, and the life of grace is at an end, as the life of the body is at an end so soon as its breathing is stopped.

My brethren, this is one of the most important truths in the Christian religion. It is the Holy Spirit and his work upon the heart that makes us Christians; "For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his"—he is no Christian. So say the oracles of truth. If any man—be he ever so moral and honest—a strict observer of outward duties, a good churchman—a charitable man; yet if he has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his—he is none of Christ's family. He is not a living member of Christ's body. He may have a name that he liveth, but he is dead. And what good would it do you to have the name of a living man, if your body was dead? If you could neither stir nor move, if your breath was stopped, would it be of any service to you, that men said you were alive? Could their saying so raise you to life? Infinitely more useless is it to have a name, that your soul liveth, while it is dead to God. Hear this, ye formal professors, who are destitute of the life and power of religion. You are but so many dry bones. And what vast numbers have we of them in all our congregations! Oh that the almighty Spirit may put the breath of life into you,

and quicken you together with Christ, and make you sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

Perhaps you think you don't stand in need of his grace. Then, if God be true, you have no more life in your soul than these dry bones had, when they lay loose and scattered up and down in the valley. Until he put his life-giving Spirit into you, you are as dead as they were. Or perhaps you think you may have his grace, and not know it. That cannot be. The Holy Spirit is the convincer of sin. When he awakens your conscience, fills it with conviction, and there is a shaking in every part and faculty, what a strange shaking would it be, if you should neither know it, nor feel it. So again, when he infuses into you the breath of life, and you live to God, what an unaccountable breath would this be, if having it and living by it, you should not know it? Did these dry bones know, when they were alive, and stood upon their feet? Most certainly they did. Do you know now, whither you breathe and live, or not? Just the same evidence has the soul of its being alive to God. "We know that we are passed," says an apostle, "from death unto life." We know the same, say all his disciples—We know that God hath given to us eternal life—We have his Spirit the witness, the earnest of it in our hearts, and the world may see the evidence of it in our lives and conversations.

But is not this, will some say, talking like enthusiasts? It is their very language. But then it is also the language of scripture. The Old Testament is full of this enthusiasm.—The New abounds with it. You can scarce open the Bible any where, without finding some high flights of enthusiasm, something concerning being quickened by the Spirit, being born of the Spirit, and raised up by him, being instructed and led by the Spirit, having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, concerning his dwelling in believers, and their having the witness of the Spirit, and being sealed by him, and sanctified, and strengthened with might by him in the inner man. If these scripture expressions savour strongly of enthusiasm, so does the liturgy of our church. Every day we pray to God that he would not take his Holy Spirit from us, but would cleanse our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, and would enable us by his holy inspiration, to think those things that be good, and by his merciful guiding to perform the same, would renew us daily by his Holy Spirit, and grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things: we pray to him to comfort us, even that we may rejoice evermore in his holy comfort, and that he may exalt us unto the same place, whither our Saviour Christ is gone before. No words can be stronger than the petitions, which we have been offering up this very day at the throne of grace—"O God, forasmuch as without thee, we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Such is the language of scripture, and the language of our church. They both speak of the Holy Spirit as the vital principle of the Christian religion, so that if you take him out of it, you leave its professors like a body without breath: for the Holy Spirit is to their souls what breath is to their bodies, insomuch that they cannot live one moment to God without his continual inspiration. And surely it is not enthusiasm to say, that our bodies cannot live without breath; and how then can it be enthusiasm to say, that our souls cannot live without the Holy Spirit, who is the breath of our spiritual life?

Since, then, there lays no objection against the doctrine contained in the parable; since all men are by nature dead in trespasses and sins: since nothing can raise them from the death of sin to newness of life, but the inspiration of the Almighty; and since Christ has purchased life for the dead in sin, and the Holy Spirit is to apply it and to quicken them, the discourse is now brought to a point. Only one question now remains, and that is, Has this parable been fulfilled in us? Can every one of us lay his hand upon his heart, and declare in the presence of God, "I know this scripture to be true by my own experience. The Spirit of God showed me my guilt and danger, at the sight of which my unbelieving heart shook and trembled for fear, but he gave me grace to resolve, that I would seek Jesus until I found him: on him I was kept waiting, enabled to reject all hopes in my own power or works, until he put his witnessing Spirit

within me, and I knew that I was one of the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Can every one of you say, that God had dealt thus with your souls? If he hath, happy are ye. In you this scripture is fulfilled. But if he hath not, it was written for your instruction—to teach you, how God would deal with you, if ever he brings you to himself. Oh that his good Spirit may deal with you in the manner here described, that he may now begin, and carry on the work of grace step by step, until all the dry bones, until every dead sinner be awakened, and hear the word of the Lord; until every awakened sinner be pardoned and justified, and sanctified, and at last glorified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. May he who is almighty to quicken the dry bones, exert his power in quickening all this congregation to a life of grace here, and to a life of eternal glory hereafter. Grant this, blessed God and Father, through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit upon all our hearts now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen*.

A METHOD FOR PREVENTING THE FREQUENCY OF ROBBERIES AND MURDERS;

PROPOSED IN

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER-SQUARE, AT ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST, AND AT SEVERAL OTHER PLACES IN LONDON.

The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the table of their heart.—Jer. xvii. 1.

Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man.—Matthew xv. 19, 20.

ALL these evil things, which defile the man, proceed from the heart: here the desires are first formed, and from hence they flow out, and put in motion, and animate the other faculties. And such as the fountain is, such are the streams which flow from it. If the heart be evil and corrupt in itself, the thoughts of the heart will also be evil and corrupt, and the actions which are directed by these thoughts, must also partake of their evil and corruption. For the heart thinks, resolves, and then acts; and if the thought be evil, the resolution and the act, which are the direct consequences of it, must be also evil. Nothing but evil can flow from an evil heart. Whenever the scripture speaks of the faculties of the soul, it uses words borrowed from the faculties of the body, because we are not capable of forming any idea of spiritual, unless they be compared to material objects. The soul has its spring and principle of motion as well as the body, and this we call the heart, borrowing the word from that part, which is known to be the spring and principle of all the motions in the human frame; for from the heart proceeds that vital blood, which carries on every operation throughout the body, and from which every vessel and organ has its proper nourishment ministered. The heart has the same use and office in our little world, as the sun has in the great world, being the fountain of life and genial warmth, of growth and strength in the microcosm of man. And when we apply this word to the soul, we fix the same meaning to it. The heart is that part which puts all the other faculties of the soul in motion, it is the fountain from whence our thoughts flow, and our resolutions and actions are only so many streams, which take a good or bad tincture according to the nature of the spring from whence they have their origin.

In this sense our blessed Lord here speaks of the soul; he makes the heart the fruitful cause of every vice, supposing it to be polluted even at the very fountain-head; and how then is it possible there should be any thing but pollution in the channels, which issue from it? If the heart be corrupt, so will be the actions. From an evil heart nothing can proceed, but murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false-witness, and blasphemy: for when the principle which sets all these in motion is defiled, what can spring from it but defilement?

This is our Lord's doctrine, and never was there greater occasion to consider it, than in the present times, when these vices are grown to such an enormous height, that they are openly committed in defiance of all law, divine and human. The legislature has been lately alarmed at their prodigious increase, and has been trying to find out some effectual remedy: but what has been hitherto attempted has not met with the desired success. Robberies, murders, &c. are still as common as ever, and will become daily more common, unless we strike at the root of the evil. The heart is the cause of all, and no act of parliament can touch the heart. It is out of the reach of every human tribunal. The vices by which our natural corruption have got into the heart, cannot be displaced by the wisest laws and edicts; these can only regulate the outward actions. The polluted fountain is still inaccessible to any authority but the great Creator's. He alone can give the almighty fiat, let it be clean, and it is clean. Nothing can purify it from the unclean thoughts of murder, adultery, fornication, &c. but his divine grace and virtue; to which may he enable us now to commit the guidance of our hearts. We beseech thee to take them, O eternal Spirit, under thy gracious influence, and let no unclean thought enter into them, while we are meditating upon these words of our God and Saviour—"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man."

First, It is here asserted, that the heart, the fountain of all our actions, is polluted.

Secondly, The manner in which it became polluted is here plainly implied; and this will lead us,

Thirdly, To enquire into the means of cleansing and purifying it.

First, our blessed Lord here declares, that the heart, the fountain of all thought and motion, is polluted. In its natural state it is entirely impure. It is the unclean residence of the foulest spirits, even of murder, adultery, fornication, theft, perjury, and blasphemy. These are they which by nature dwell in the heart and defile the man: for corrupt nature is always disposed to receive some one or all of these polluted tempers, as temptation shall offer. The propensity to them is universal. Our church has accurately described this point in her 9th article.

"Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit, and therefore in every person born into the world it deserved God's wrath and damnation."

This was the opinion of our reformers, and if you find any difficulty in giving your assent to it, the arguments upon which they built it will, I hope, satisfy you perfectly. The express testimony of the Creator of the hearts of all men, and the experience of thinking men from the beginning of the world to this day, were the chief authorities upon which they grounded their opinion. The whole scripture supposes man to be in a state of corruption, and several passages express the universality of this corruption. It is thus delivered, Gen. vi. 5, in the clearest terms. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Man does not here signify any one man, or race of men, but mankind, the whole human nature, which is said to be so polluted with original wickedness, that every imagination, not one excepted, of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, and continually too. What a fountain then of deadly poison is the human heart; since all the streams which flow from it are evil, and continually evil! The universal spreading of this malignant infection could not be expressed in stronger

words, than to declare, that there was not one imagination in the heart, but what was evil, and always evil. Such is man in his natural state: and might not then the apostle truly say of it, Eph. ii. 3. "We are all by nature the children of wrath even as others; for the scripture hath concluded all (men, both Jews and Gentiles) under sin."

This is the scripture account of the heart of the natural man, and experience confirms it. Men are in fact such as the scripture describes them, a race of fallen corrupt beings. We find none of them upright and perfect, no not one. That moral rectitude of nature, which some metaphysical divines dream of, has no existence among the sons of Adam. Heathen writers as well as Christian prove it to be but a dream: for of the corruption of nature they all complain, and give us melancholy proofs of the prevalency of the vices mentioned in the text in every country and in every age. In the present age we see and feel them: they are grown to such an enormous height at present, that they are become a reproach to our religion, and a dishonour to our laws. Not a day passes, but we hear of some robbery, or murder, or adultery, &c., and the fountain from whence they all spring is the heart. And can the heart then be clean by nature, and yet send forth such polluted streams? Certainly the same spring cannot send forth sweet water and bitter? That which sends forth nothing but corruption, must be corrupt in its very origin. The peccant matter must lie at the fountain head, and how rank and venomous it is, we can have no doubt, if we will but open our eyes, and survey that deluge of wickedness, which now covers the face of the earth.

It is certain then that the heart of man is by nature polluted. Scripture and sad experience forbid us to doubt of it; and yet against the evidence of these authorities there are some men, who call it in question, and who think they show their superior reason by believing neither God, nor their own senses. What God declares to them they cannot but see is a matter of fact, and yet because they find some difficulty in accounting for the manner in which the heart became so polluted, they would therefore strangely infer, that it is not polluted at all. This is a very absurd conduct, but it is common to all unbelievers, and therefore it is necessary to speak to the

Second particular, wherein it was proposed to consider the manner in which the human heart became thus polluted. None of the ancient philosophers, nor none of the modern reasoners, have given us any satisfactory account upon this head. The origin of evil is a subject, which has been always debated in the schools of the infidels, and they have not yet produced any solution which their own advocates are agreed to defend. How evil came into the heart is, upon the plan of their natural and metaphysical religion, absolutely unaccountable. And this is a good presumptive proof in favour of the scripture account: for the heart is certainly polluted, and the greatest men among the ancient philosophers and the modern unbelievers have been able to offer nothing satisfactory, neither to themselves nor others, concerning the manner of its pollution. But the scripture accounts for it thus, in a plain intelligible way.

God created all things at first in a perfect state. When he had finished his works, he took a survey of them, and pronounced them all to be very good. There was no pain in the natural, and no evil in the spiritual, world. Man was innocent. His heart was right with God. The thoughts of it were clean and pure altogether. He knew no guilt; he had no fear; and therefore he was happy.

The creature, who first introduced evil into the works of God, was the devil; for thus says our blessed Saviour, "The devil was a murderer from the beginning, and a liar, and the father of it," John viii. 44. In the beginning he murdered our first parents, by seducing them into that sin, which subjected their bodies to death, and both their bodies and souls to eternal condemnation. And he was the father of lies as well as of murder: for all was truth and innocence, until he offered the first lying suggestion to the heart, and basely insinuated, that God had maliciously forbidden our first parents the use of the tree of knowledge. To this insinuation they hearkened, they suffered it to make an impression upon their hearts, and disbelieving what their gracious Creator and heavenly Father had revealed to them, they built their faith on the words of the lying spirit, and acted accordingly. Thus he deceived them, and in them all their posterity; for St.

John, speaking of the great dragon, says, "This is that old serpent called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." Rev. xii. 9.

The consequence of our first parents being deceived by his lying insinuations was the loss of their innocence and happiness. With their innocence they lost the grace and presence of God: "For he is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity," and after his divine grace and presence were withdrawn, the heart was left to itself, and to its own natural workings, which under the tempter's management could produce nothing but murders, adulteries, thefts, &c. which are the corrupt fruits of a corrupt heart. And into whatever heart the divine grace is not returned, the same corruptions still remain, and we see the effects of them still breaking out in the same abominable vices: for the heart of the natural man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked—so wicked, that sin is engraven upon it with a character, which no human art or power can erase. "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the table of their heart." Jer. xvii. 1. And what hand can come at these impressions, which are cut so deep as to be incorporated into the very substance of the heart? What power can reach and deface them, but his alone, whose prerogative it is to search the heart and the reins?

This is the scripture account. And as it is most plain and rational, to what can unbelievers object? They have nothing to substitute instead of this: and they can urge nothing against it, except they inquire, Why God should suffer man to fall, if he foresaw that it would be attended with such dreadful consequences? But this is only asking, Why he made man a free agent? For if he was free, he must have a capacity to make a wrong, as well as a right, use of his free will; and therefore he could not be placed in a state falling from which was impossible. That the first man was created with free will we have a most melancholy demonstration, the effects of which are still seen and felt all over the world; and that he had every assistance which could enable him to make a right use of his free will, the scripture gives us a full account: but he abused it. Upon which the assistance before given was withdrawn; and after this assistance was taken out of the heart, there was nothing left in it but its own fleshly desires and inclinations; and when these were spirited up by the lying suggestion of the infernal tempter, what could come out of such a heart, but murder, adultery, fornication, robbery, with all the other polluted works of the flesh and the devil?

Upon this state of the case it appears, that man lost by the fall the two chief blessings of his spiritual life, namely, the image of God, and the Spirit of God. Sin blotted out the image of God, in which man was at first created, and the scripture expressly declares, that we were afterwards born in the image of our father Adam with all his worldly desires, and corrupt inclinations. Gen. v. 3. And these the sacred writers generally term "the flesh," signifying by this word all the carnal appetites which govern man since the fall, and of which the apostle declares, "That they who are in the flesh cannot please God," Rom. viii. 8. Because while they are governed by the flesh, and not by the Spirit, they continue in the image of the earthly Adam, and in the likeness of his fallen nature; by which they are also alienated from the Spirit of God. The divine and holy Spirit left the polluted temple of the heart after sin had profaned it. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity, and therefore he could not dwell in an impure heart; and upon his retiring, it became alienated from the life of God, being now a perfect stranger to all the graces of that spiritual life, which innocent man had always, and liberally enjoyed. And after the divine image was thus extinguished, and the divine Spirit was gone, which the scripture expressly declares were the two fatal effects of the fall, then the heart of man was under the dominion of its own fleshly desires, and was ready to commit any of the abominable deeds of the flesh, whenever opportunity should offer, and inclination invite, and the devil strongly solicit to the commission of them.

Now every man who comes into the world is by nature in this state, and he will continue in it, until he finds the misery of it; until the sense of his distress force him to cry out, Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? This conviction of our misery is the first step towards a deliverance from it. So soon as we find ourselves sick, we are half cured: for if we can

but bring ourselves to go with humility and prayer to the almighty Physician, he has promised to give us freely every thing proper for our relief. He is both able and willing to cleanse the fountain of the heart from all its corruptions, which is the

Third and last inquiry I was to make: for though man be miserable in himself, yet God hath not left him without remedy. The great design of Christianity is to restore man to the state from whence he fell, and by the same steps through which he fell. Sin put an entire stop to the divine grace and influence, which are as necessary to the soul as breath is to the body, and when they were withdrawn, the sinner then lost the image of God, and the Spirit of God: through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ the divine grace and influence are offered to us again, and whoever seeks them by humility and prayer, until he receive them, is then made a partaker of the Spirit of God, who first makes the heart faithful and penitent, and afterwards justifies it by the blood of Christ, and sanctifies it by forming in it all the sweet and holy tempers of the blessed Jesus, in which the image of God now consists. And when the heart is thus created anew and regenerated, then is that great change perfected, of which the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xv. "As we have born the image of the first Adam, who is of the earth, in like manner shall we bear the image of the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven." And whoever is renewed after the image of this second Adam, he has a clean and a pure heart, and a sweet fountain might as soon send forth poisonous water, as this sanctified heart can produce murder, adultery, fornication, or any of the filthy works of the flesh.

This is the scripture account of the means of cleansing the heart. The great purifier is Jesus Christ, whose blood has infinite merit to wash away the pollutions of the whole world. The Holy Spirit is the gracious agent, who purifies the heart with this all-meritorious blood. It is his office to take out by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus all the guilt of our corrupt nature, and "to create in us a new heart and a right spirit,"—the new heart bears the image of our merciful Saviour, and the right spirit is no longer alienated from the life of God, but lives in holy communion and fellowship with the Holy Spirit. And thus the sinner becomes a new man and a new creature. His soul is endued with a new set of faculties and tempers entirely Christian, and his heart which was formerly the habitation of the foulest vices, of murder, adultery, fornication, &c. is now consecrated, and made an holy temple for the living God.

This is the only method, which the scripture has taught us, of cleansing the heart from those worldly and carnal tempers with which it is by nature infected. If you refuse to believe the scripture, try any other method; but be assured you must come to this at last. Experience will bring you to it. You will find, God grant you may find it in time, that nothing is able to purify the heart, but the blood of the Lamb of God, and that nothing is able to apply it to the heart, but the eternal Spirit. You will be the more fully convinced of this the more you try other things: see first how far the boasted religion of nature, and its moral rectitude, and the fitness of things, and such like metaphysical nonentities, can reform the heart—make your experiments upon the liberal arts and sciences—go through them one after another—study books and men—try every thing that wit can invent or money purchase, and withhold nothing from your soul of all its desires—and then sit down, and carefully and impartially examine your own heart, and judge, how far all these worldly pursuits and attainments have reformed it. And what is the issue? Are you really better? Do you find your heart more free from corruption than it was when you first set out? You will not, you cannot assert it: because reason and matter of fact are against you; they demonstrate, that our worldly tempers must be fed and encouraged by these worldly pursuits and attainments; for it is a glaring contradiction to suppose that we can increase our spirituals, by laying out all our time and pains upon temporals. Be therefore assured that the more you try these worldly things, the worse you will be: and the longer you try them, the more difficult you will find it to be set right. They have no virtue to take one single vice out of the heart, but as they fall in with our corrupt inclinations, they must encourage and strengthen every vice, which is in the heart. If you try all the powers upon earth, you will find by

experience, that the heart is out of their reach, and at last, if ever you see the face of God with joy, you must conclude, that there is nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ, and the operation of his good Spirit, which is able to cleanse your polluted hearts, and to renew a right spirit within you.

Thus it is abundantly evident from experience, that nothing can purify and take away the natural pollutions of the heart, but the blood of Jesus Christ sprinkled upon it by the Holy Spirit. This is the only gospel method. And it is able to purify by faith and take away all these pollutions which nothing else can: for its power is also abundantly evident from experience. It has been found effectual, after all other methods have failed. It has been tried ever since sin first entered into the world, and has ever succeeded. And this single circumstance seems sufficient to recommend it to the minds of all serious persons, and to determine them to receive it as the sovereign remedy of their natnral corruptions. We have in the first ages after Christ, a particular account of the great change made in men's hearts upon their embracing the gospel. And these accounts are so well attested, that if the strongest historical evidence can gain your assent, they will appear to you full and decisive. I remember to have seen a passage in Lactantius, where in his apology for the Christians of his time, he has these words, "Give me a man," says he to the heathens, "who is passionate, malicious, headstrong; with a few gospel precepts, I will render him as meek as a lamb. Give me one who is covetous, I will soon persuade him to be liberal and charitable. Give me one who dreads afflictions and death, I will make him run and court martyrdom. Give me an unclean, intemperate, unjust, cruel, sinful wretch; I will, by the knowledge of Christ, and by the influence of his laws, render him chaste, sober, merciful, innocent, and holy." Lactantius had good reason for what he here asserts: he had seen the gospel of Christ take these vices out of men's hearts, and we have seen the same happy effects of it in our days; not indeed in so great a number, but, God be praised for it, we have enow to demonstrate to any unbeliever, that the same gospel has still the same power. You do not see so much of its power, because you do not hear so much of the gospel. But wherever the pure gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, and men receive it with faith, their experience daily confirms what Lactantius long ago observed You still see it work the same real change in men's tempers, which cannot arise from any heat of fancy, or flight of enthusiasm, or sudden rapture of devotion, because it is a sober, regular, thorough change, that reforms the heart, and all its affections, and influences the whole behaviour, rendering a man confident and uniform throughout the whole course of his future life. That such changes are wrought at this day is an undoubted matter of fact. Sinners, and great sinners too, are brought to see the error of their ways, to forsake their wicked courses, to lead a new life, to follow the commandments of God, and to walk from henceforth in his holy ways. This is an entire, a total change. When a sinner becomes a Christian, he is absolutely a new creature and a new man, insomuch that you may truly say of him, "old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new;" for he neither thinks, speaks, nor acts, as he used to do. He has a new set of senses and faculties. He neither sees things in the same light he did before, nor hears after the same manner. What formerly pleased him, now displeases. The very end of all his pursuits is changed, and his happiness is placed on a different object. We see this perfect change produced every day, when the gospel enters into any man's heart. As it takes possession, the corrupt passions retire. The Holy Spirit purifies the fountain, and then all the streams run pure. It is evident, that he has given the heart a new nature, because what proceeds from it is not influenced by the natural man. All is renewed. The murderer is humane and loving, the fornicator and adulterer are chaste, the thief is honest, the false-witness true, the blasphemer a Christian. Such is the glorious change, which the Holy Spirit makes when he sprinkles the heart with the all-purifying blood of the Lamb of God.

And now we have discovered the cause of the evil, and its remedy. The heart of every man we find to be by nature corrupt, destitute entirely of divine grace, and disposed, as temptation shall offer, to commit any wickedness: for from this fruitful fountain, from the heart of the natural man, proceed murders, adulteries,

fornication, thefts, perjuries, and blasphemies. And nothing but the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus can dry up this fountain of sin, and nothing can carry the virtue of it to the heart but an almighty Spirit. Human laws, which are the only expedient lately attempted, cannot come to the head and source of this corrupt fountain. It lies too deep. Their power cannot reach it, and much less purify it. An act of parliament can only regulate the outward behaviour. It can take no cognizance of a crime, until it break out into some overt act, and therefore it can have no influence over the heart. If murder, adultery, robbery, &c. be in the heart, there all statute laws leave them; and the inclination only waits for a fair opportunity, which it will always embrace, whenever there is a prospect of escaping the lash of the law. Thus no sin is hereby prevented. Only the commission of it is rendered more private, and the heart is put upon inventing schemes, how it may gratify itself in its pleasures, without incurring the pains and penalties, which the law threatens to inflict. By this means the corruption that seems to be diminished in the channels, gathers and increases at the fountain-head, where the more it is stopped, the more it ferments and pollutes itself. Since this is the case, what reformation can we expect from the interposition of human authority? Supposing the legislature should follow his majesty's gracious instructions from the throne, and try to find out some new laws for putting a stop to robberies and murders, yet experience would soon prove them to be ineffectual. All the human laws which ever were made, or ever will be made, cannot reform one single person, because they cannot reach the heart. Gospel and not law should be here employed. The gospel can take sin out of the heart, but the law can only make the commission of it more private. The clergy therefore should be called upon, and not the magistrate. This is, under God, the peculiar business of the ministers of the gospel, and it is, I fear, owing to their great neglect of their duty, that robberies and murders are become so common. Our people grow more corrupt in their morals, not for want of good statute laws, but for want of good gospel ministers. For it is certain, that the gospel, and nothing else, can take murder, adultery, fornication, robbery, &c. out of the heart, and it is as certain, that the gospel has taken them out of the heart, wherever it has been properly received: and therefore either in the manner of applying the gospel, or in not applying it at all, there is a great failing somewhere or other among us. God Almighty grant, that they who are guilty may see their error, and may have grace to repent and amend.

And now let me intreat you, my brethren, to pray that these truths may make a proper impression upon your minds. You have heard me labour this point much of late. It appears to me to be the most important in Christianity, and therefore in several discourses I have been endeavouring to give you a just sense of your state and condition by nature. What success they may have met with depends upon God, whose blessing upon them I do most sincerely implore. All our preaching can do nothing to your hearts without his grace, and I beseech him that, out of the riches of his infinite love to sinners, through Jesus Christ, he would be pleased to let you see your own hearts: for until you behold that defilement and corruption, in which the heart of every man lies by nature, you will see but little necessity for a Saviour. And this divine grace I hope he will now send into all our hearts, that you may be disposed to receive favourably, and to profit by, two short remarks, with which I shall apply the doctrine, first to them who do not believe it, then to them who have given their free assent.

If any of you do not believe the doctrine, you are in a very dangerous situation. because you are on the very brink of destruction, and yet do not see your danger. Can you think your heart is not corrupt? This very thought demonstrates its corruption; for sinners you certainly are, and all sin comes from the heart; and can the heart send forth a whole life of sin, and not be sinful itself? This is impossible. To believe such an impossibility argues a most dangerous state of mind. A man does not cheat himself more, who fancies himself to be in good health, when he has been long ill, and is just dying, than he who fancies his heart to be pure, although every thing that flows from it is impure. This is one of the greatest delusions of sin. It lulls the sinner into a state of security, and tempts him to believe, that his heart is pure and without spot, although it be nothing but

corruption and deformity. Whoever is tempted into this belief does not know himself. And if any of you have fallen into this fatal error, I pray God to let you know yourselves: for you are as yet perfect strangers to your own breasts. If you were to see them naked and open, with all the little lurking places, where self-love and vain-glory conceal your failings, the moment you beheld the horrid sight, it would force you to cry out, "Jesus, master, have mercy on me." Oh! what a blessing would it be, if you could now speak these words from your hearts! I hope you will. And may the Lord God of heaven show you, what you really are by nature, and then make you what you ought to be by grace.

To you who believe the doctrine, I need not use many words, because you are convinced, that the heart is a polluted fountain, from whence all vices spring, and that nothing can purify it, but the blood of the Lamb of God sprinkled upon it by the Holy Spirit. This is the firm belief of every Christian. I hope you know it to be true, both from scripture and from experience. You find that the fountain has been cleansed, because the streams run pure. Your lives and actions show, that God has created a new heart, and has renewed a right spirit within you, and it is your whole care and study to keep this new heart clean and holy. But whenever you find any defilement beginning to arise, even in thought, immediately send up your prayers to God. Intreat his grace to keep you from the pollution of sin, and if you always make him your refuge and strength, constantly seeking him in the ways of his ordinances, then his Holy Spirit will keep out of your hearts all those corruptions, which defile the man, and your Lord Jesus will so purify you by his infinite merits, that you shall be presented before God the Father without spot of sin unto salvation. Blessed Lord and Saviour, carry these truths to all our hearts; accompany them, we intreat thee, with thy blessing; and keep our hearts pure by thy grace, until thou bring them safe unto thy glory. *Amen.*

A DISCOURSE

ON THE BENEFIT WHICH

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD IS OF TO MAN, IN HIS JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE.

PREACHED AT

CHRIST CHURCH, IN NEWGATE STREET, ON WHITSUN-MONDAY, MAY 19 1755, PURSUANT TO THE WILL OF MISS ELIZABETH HILL, LATE OF FALMOUTH, CORNWALL

The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness.—Eph. v. 9.

PREFACE.

THE following discourse was drawn up at the request of Miss Hill's executor, to whom I am greatly obliged for appointing me to preach on Whitsun-Monday, agreeably to the words of her will, on the benefit which the Holy Spirit of God is of to man in his journey through life. And what I thought myself bound in duty to deliver from the pulpit, I have since been persuaded to send from the press; for although it contains nothing new either in the matter or manner, yet I think it incumbent upon me to bear my public testimony to the great doctrine of Christianity here inculcated. I am prepared for the reception it will meet with, not only from the Monthly Reviewers, the avowed enemies of the established church, and its established doctrines, but also from all mere nominal Christians.

But let them ridicule it ever so much as Hutchinsonian Enthusiasm, yet since it is expressly taught in Scripture, and maintained in the clearest manner by our church, it will give me no concern to be reckoned an enthusiast, while the scripture is on my side, or an Hutchinsonian, while the church of England supports me; and if men will call the plain doctrines of Scripture enthusiasm, and will treat the articles, and homilies, and liturgy of our church as Hutchinsonianism, I hope I shall live and die a Church of England-Hutchinsonian-Enthusiast.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.—Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.

Our blessed Saviour showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of his apostles forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and being assembled together with them, he commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. And according to his most true promise, the Holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the apostles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth, giving them both the gifts of divers languages, and also boldness with fervent zeal, constantly to preach the gospel unto all nations, whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error, into the clear light and true knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This is the subject of the present festival. We are here assembled to commemorate the gifts and graces which the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the apostles, and to bless God for our interest in them. The same Spirit is still with us, and will abide with us for ever. He is with us, not to bring the world over to the outward profession of Christianity; for that is already effected, and the extraordinary powers which were necessary to effect it are ceased. Christianity is established, and outward miracles are no longer needful to be the outward proofs of it. But the Holy Spirit has still the same inward work to carry on, which he had in the apostles' time, and it requires the same degree of divine and almighty power, although it be not exerted in outward miracles. The mind of every man is by nature in darkness and ignorance, blind as to the things of God; this he has to enlighten with saving truth. The will and all the affections are depraved, and it is his gracious office to incline and dispose them to comply with the will of God. And after the understanding is enlightened, and the heart renewed, we have still no power to walk in the ways of holiness, without the special grace of the Holy Spirit, whose guidance is necessary every moment, and for every thought, and word, and work. These are called the ordinary operations of the Spirit of God, not as if they were less divine, or any thing short of the almighty operations, in the apostolic age, but because these were extraordinary, given for a certain fixed time, to carry on a particular work, but the former were common to all believers, to the apostles themselves as believers, and are to be the ordinary gifts and graces of every Christian unto the end of the world. And whoever has received these ordinary operations, has in his own heart clear and full testimony of the Godhead, and almighty power of the blessed Spirit. He wants no outward miracles. This great inward work is to him complete evidence; and he is able to rest his salvation with as full trust and confidence upon it, as if he had seen the apostles exert their miraculous gifts and graces. May the Lord and giver of all grace be pleased to bestow upon you this inward witness, and may he enable you to look up to him for it while I am,

First, Illustrating these truths from the prophet's authority in the text, and then

Secondly, Applying them to your spiritual use and benefit.

And by the consideration of these two particulars, I hope to be able to answer the good purposes of our present meeting. We are called together by the will of a late charitable and pious lady, who appointed a sermon to be preached upon this day concerning the "benefit which the Holy Spirit of God is of to man, during his journey through this life." The subject is suitable to the great festival, which the church now celebrates, and the words which I have read contain a clear and full account of the benefit we receive from the Holy Spirit from the beginning to the end of our Christian life. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," &c. The clean water was to be sprinkled upon them to cleanse the soul; this effect is here ascribed to it; but water cannot reach the soul, or if it could, yet it was not able so to act upon it, as to cleanse it from any sinful filthiness. But the Spirit of God acts upon our spirits, as water does upon the body, and therefore it was the outward and visible sign of his inward and spiritual grace in the Old Testament, as well as the New. The phrase of sprinkling clean water to cleanse them from sin refers to the legal ablutions, and more particularly to the great typical purification for sin, of which we read Numbers xix. The ashes of the red heifer, which was burnt without the camp, were to be mixed with pure running water to be a purification for sin, and whoever contracted any legal uncleanness, and had not this sin-water sprinkled upon him to purify himself, that soul was to be cut off from among the congregation. St. Paul has applied part of this service to our Lord's suffering without the gate, Heb. xiii. 11, 12, 13, and St. John has applied the other part, John vii. 38, 39, where, upon Christ's describing the rivers of living water which should flow from believers, he says, "But this he spake of the Spirit," he spake of water as the known emblem of the Spirit, and the Christian church has always used it for his emblem in the sacrament of baptism, wherein his grace cleanses to the purifying of the soul, as water cleanses to the purifying of the flesh.

Water, then, is the instituted type of the Holy Spirit, and pouring out water to cleanse is, in the scripture manner of expression, pouring out of the Holy Spirit to cleanse the soul; and his cleansing grace must be the thing here spoken of, because it was to purify them from all sin. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you," from all the filthiness of sin, and from all the guilt of idolatry I will purify them. Sin polluted all the faculties of the soul, and my good Spirit shall cleanse them all. The understanding he shall purify by removing its natural blindness, and by opening their eyes to see the error of their ways, that they may be brought to Jesus Christ for salvation, and may have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience with the all-purifying blood of the Lamb of God, which will justify them, and may have grace and power to walk in the statutes of the Lord, and to keep his judgments, which will sanctify them; and thus he cleanses all the faculties: for it follows in the second verse of the text, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." The cleansing of the heart is the greatest work of divine grace, because there is in every sinner hardness, and an impenitent heart, which no human power can soften. The scripture speaks of it in the strongest expressions, "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, it is graven upon the table of the heart;" and what power is able to erase this deep engraving, except the Almighty God, who declares, "I will give you a new heart," renewed in all its faculties, "and a new spirit will I put within you," endued with new appetites and new affections, "and I will take away the stony heart," the refreshing streams of my grace shall soften the old hardened heart of sin, which would take no good impression, "and I will give you a heart of flesh," soft and pliable, yielding to the motions of my grace, and willing to have the law engraved by the Spirit of the living God upon the fleshly tables of the heart. And after the heart and the affections are thus

renewed, and disposed to love the will of God, the Holy Spirit was still to proceed, and to go on in the work of sanctification, in which his grace is absolutely necessary. Even after the stony heart is taken out, we still want his guidance; and whenever he leaves us to ourselves, we cannot take one step in our journey towards heaven. And therefore God promises to them who had a new heart, "that he would put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his statutes." His Spirit should be their guide, both to lead them into the way of God's commandments, and to give them strength and power to walk in these ways steadily unto the end: for the light of nature could never direct sinners into the paths of God's commandments, nor could the best natural abilities go forward in them, unless God should put his Spirit within us, and give us power to walk in his statutes. We want his support every step we take throughout the whole work of sanctification. If we go forward, he is the cause. He gives us both the will and the power; for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do. It is the Spirit of God within us, who causes us to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments and do them.

And thus the prophet has taught us of what benefit the Holy Spirit is to man during his journey through this life. We cannot so much as set out upon our journey to heaven, until he cleanse all the faculties, by removing the blindness of the understanding, and the depravity of the will and affections. It is his office to give us a new heart and a new spirit, disposed to receive impressions of the divine law, and then to endue it with power to walk in the statutes of God, and to keep his judgments and to do them; so that every step we take from the first moment we set out, until we happily arrive at the end of our journey, is directed and supported by the Holy Spirit of God. This is the prophet's doctrine, which I come

· Secondly, To apply to your spiritual use and benefit. And if we make a right use of it, we must not only endeavour to be convinced of its truth, but also to find the power of it operating upon our lives and conversations; for it would be to no purpose to believe, that the Holy Spirit is the author and finisher of the whole work of grace, if this belief should rest unoperative in the head, and never dispose us to seek the experience of it in the heart, and in the rest of the faculties. Since his grace is to cleanse us from all the pollutions of sin, and to create in us a new heart, and to renew a right spirit within us, and to give us power to walk in the way of God's commandments, let us not hear these truths as mere speculative points, but let us suffer the conviction of them to operate in our lives, and to carry us to seek our own interest in them. And I hope the blessed Spirit will render profitable to these good purposes what I have to offer concerning the usefulness of his guidance throughout the journey of life.

Sin polluted the whole man, and made every part and power unclean and abominable altogether, and the prophet ascribes to the Holy Spirit the whole work of cleansing the soul. His grace is necessary to purify every faculty. He begins with removing the darkness of the understanding, and enlightening it with all-saving truth, of which by nature we are ignorant. Sin rendered us incapable of seeing spiritual objects. It did not entirely destroy the organ of sight, but it entirely stopped all communion between it and the fountain of light, and brought the soul into such a state as the body would be in if the sun was blotted out of heaven, and the moon and stars were no more to reflect their enlivening rays upon the earth. This would be a most uncomfortable and heavy night, in which, although the bodily organ of sight remained, yet these outward objects would be as invisible, as if the organ was quite destroyed. And sin produced the same effects in the spiritual world. Every son of Adam is in darkness and the shadow of death, until the Holy Spirit of God enlighten the eyes of the understanding. St. Paul's account of the Gentiles is this, (Eph. iv. 18.) "they had the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Sin darkened the understanding and alienated them from the life of God, by separating them from that divine light, which is the principle of their spiritual life, and therefore they lived no longer unto God, but were cut off from all intercourse and communion with him. In this state of darkness and blindness we

all continue, entirely ignorant of the the things of God, until his good Spirit manifest them unto us. The natural understanding in its highest refinement cannot discover them; "for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) The natural man cannot receive spiritual things. God must reveal them unto him by his Spirit, before he can have the least discernment of them, even what is revealed concerning them in scripture cannot be discerned, until the Holy Spirit open the eyes to behold it. And under the sense of this truth the prophet thus intreats God, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," Psalm cxix. 18; to open the eyes to behold them was the work of God. And again he prays, "Give me understanding," (it was the gift of God) "that I may learn thy commandments. I am thy servant, give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies," Psalm cxix. 73, 125. And to the same effect St. Paul prays for his Ephesians, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, "that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened." This was the work of God. He was to give unto them the Spirit, and the Spirit was to give them wisdom, and to reveal the knowledge of God to them, by which means the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened.

This is the doctrine of Scripture; and I may confirm it from an authority, which I esteem next to the word of God, and that is the sense of our church upon this point. In the collect for the 5th Sunday after Easter she teaches us to pray, "O Lord, from whom all good things do come; grant to us, thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good," &c.: we cannot so much as think a good thought unless we have the holy inspiration of God. And again on the 9th Sunday after Trinity we pray, "Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful, that we who cannot do anything that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord." To the same purpose we read in the third part of the homily for Rogation week, "Let us meekly call upon the bountiful Spirit, the Holy Ghost, to inspire us with his presence, that we may be able to hear the goodness of God to our salvation. For without his lively inspiration, can we not so much as speak the name of the Mediator. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Much less should we be able to understand these great mysteries, that be open to us by Christ. "For we have received," saith St. Paul, "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, for this purpose, that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God." In the power of the Holy Ghost resteth all ability to know God and to please him. It is he that purifieth the mind by his secret working. He enlighteneth the heart to conceive worthy thoughts of Almighty God." These authorities are clear. They expressly declare, that we cannot think such things as be rightful without the holy inspiration of the Spirit of God. These are the sentiments of Scripture, and of the Church of England, concerning the first step we are to take in our Christian course.

By removing the darkness of the natural understanding, and by enlightening it with all saving truth, the Holy Spirit enables us to see the way to heaven. The next step is to dispose the will to walk in it; for after we see the right way, yet we have no desire to walk in it, until he renew the heart. It is the work of his grace to incline the will, and to dispose it aright, that it may consent to the will of God: for our wills are by nature corrupt. The will of the flesh is opposite to the will of God; and our affections are so depraved, that they choose only evil, and continually. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. And this continually evil heart is also obdurately evil. It is stony and rocky, harder than adamant. All the powers in nature cannot soften it. Sin has rendered it incapable of any good impression, unless it be made by an almighty arm. He alone who created the heart can make it relent before him. To soften an hardened heart is as great a work as to create a world, and

therefore the prophet prays, "create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." To create, is to make a thing out of nothing, and the same creative power which brought the heavens and the earth out of nothing is necessary to create in the sinner a clean heart: for to cast him in a new mould, and to make him a new man, is harder than to make him a man at first; because nothing opposed his creation. God spake, and it was done. But the heart, which was conceived in sin, has lived in sin, and has loved sin, and placed all its affections upon it, has an utter aversion to this new creation. And what power is able to take the love of sin out of the heart, and to render it willing to be made pure and holy? Say, who is equal to this great work? Certainly, no created power. He alone can do it, who turneth the hard rock into a standing water, and the flint stone into a springing well. He can do it, and he has promised, "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away your stony heart, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you." My Spirit shall work this great change. He shall take the hard stony heart out of you, which is altogether sinful, and shall enable you to delight in the law of God in the inner man. And thus he renews the heart, "for we are saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 5.) And

This is the language of our church. On Christmas day we use these words, "Almighty God—grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit," &c. And again on the 19th Sunday after Trinity we pray, "O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord." We are taught the reason for offering up these petitions in the 10th article "of free-will."

"The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good-will, and working with us when we have that good-will." We have lost by the fall the power of turning and preparing our hearts to any religious exercise, and we have not even the good-will, much less the power, to do any one good work, until the grace of God go before and dispose the will, and afterwards work with us, when we have that good-will; from whence it is evident, that the will and the affections must be renewed by the Holy Ghost, before there can be any good in fallen man; agreeably to what we read (Prov. xvi. 1.) "that the preparations of the heart in man are from the Lord."

From these authorities of scripture, and of our own church, it must be evident to every unprejudiced person, that the heart is by nature inclined to evil, hard and stony, and unwilling to receive any good impressions, and no power can soften it but an almighty Spirit, whose grace alone is able to renew it after the image of him that created it.

And after the understanding is enlightened, and the will and affections renewed, we still want grace every moment to enable us to go on in the ways of holiness. After we have received justifying grace, we continually stand in need of the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. We cannot take one step without his assistance: for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do. We have no power nor might in ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God. In our spiritual course his grace is as necessary, as breathing is to the body. There is but one word in scripture for the air which the body breathes, and for that grace which is the breath of our spiritual life; and if you cannot move, much less run a race, without breath, how then can you run through your Christian course without grace? You must breathe the air in at every step, and you must have grace breathed into you every step you take in your way to heaven. And therefore when our blessed Lord breathed upon the apostles, he at the same time explained the meaning of what he did by saying, "receive ye the Holy Ghost," whose gracious office it is to act upon the soul as breath does upon the body, and hence it is called inspiration, which signifies breathing in; and since this inspiration is as necessary to our spiritual life as breath is to our animal life, is it not

from hence certain, that we cannot take one step in the ways of holiness, unless the inspiration of the Almighty enable us to proceed?

And these are the sentiments of the word of God. "O Lord, I know," says Jeremiah (x. 23.) "that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The Psalmist acknowledges it, for he prays, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and make me to go in the path of thy commandments." And again he says, "I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart," when thou shalt give it freedom and liberty, that it may walk with pleasure in those paths which are to the natural man grievous. And the New Testament opens and explains these expressions of the Old, by assuring us, that believers "walk in the Spirit, and are led by the Spirit," and are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, "who gives them grace to serve God acceptably: for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." And to enable us to produce these fruits, the Comforter is to be with us for ever. He is to guide and direct our lives, and to govern our conversations. He will never leave us, nor forsake us, but will support us with his grace every moment. And this his continual assistance our church prays for in these words: "O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in ALL things direct and rule our hearts." (9th Sunday after Trinity.) And again, "O Lord—grant that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guidance may perform the same." (5th Sunday after Easter.) From whence it is evident, that the holy Spirit is our guide through the journey of life. The whole work of sanctification is his. He cleanses the heart, purifies it, fills it full of faith, and hope, and love, and enriches it with all the sweet and heavenly tempers of the blessed Jesus. He sanctifies every visitation to God's people; if it be prosperous, he keeps them humble; if it be adverse, he arms them with patience, and thus he makes all things work together for their good. God grant you may all find these truths verified by your own experience: for truths they are, and you cannot deny them. If you believe the word of God, and if you pay any regard to the doctrines of our church, you must confess, that the Holy Spirit is the author and finisher of our happy journey through life. Sinful fallen man has no light to direct him in the way, until the Holy Spirit remove the darkness of the understanding, and reveal every saving truth, and then he sees the paths which lead to everlasting joy. This is the first step. But when he sees them he has no will to walk in them. His heart is set against them, it is hard and stony, and inflexibly evil. The Holy Spirit alone has power to work upon it, and to melt it down into a softer tender heart, which will freely yield to have the law of God engraven upon it. And after we have taken this step, after we have seen the right road in which our journey lies, and are disposed to walk in it, yet we want power to succeed successfully. Sin made us weak and infirm, and inbred corruption keeps us so, and therefore the same good Spirit, that worketh all in all, must go along with us every step to strengthen our weakness, and support us every moment to help our infirmities. We are not sufficient for these things of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.

And since the evidence of this doctrine is clear and full, and not to be denied by any person, who allows the authority of Scripture, I may here rest the matter at present, and enquire what effect your assent to it has produced. Have you desired to experience the truth of it? Or have you found the comfort of it in your souls? Do you remember when the Holy Spirit opened your eyes, and brought you out of darkness into his marvellous light? Is your will reconciled to the will of God? And are you able to conform your lives and conversations to it? If you are in this happy state, and if before God the searcher of hearts, you can declare that he has done these wonders for your salvation, O be thankful unto him, and live a life of praise and gratitude. May the Holy Spirit direct every thought, and word, and work, to the honour and glory of Jesus Christ your Saviour and your God. But

If you call yourselves Christians, and yet know nothing of those great changes,

which the Holy Spirit must work in your hearts before you are Christians indeed, O consider in what a dangerous state you live. If God be true, your souls are in darkness, your hearts in sin, and all your faculties under the power of Satan; and until you be enlightened and converted, have a new heart, and a new nature, you are children of wrath, and if you die in this state, you are lost and ruined to all eternity. If ever you see the face of God with joy, you must be renewed in the Spirit of your mind. You must be made just and holy. All this must be done. You must experience it, and you will know it as certainly as you know any truth, when the Holy Spirit bears testimony with your spirits, that you are the children of God.

But you have been told, that this doctrine is enthusiasm. It is so, in the opinion of the world, and it ever was, and ever will be. It must be enthusiasm to the natural man to talk of the inward working of the Holy Spirit; for he discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because he has no spiritual discernment. To a man who never found himself in darkness, never felt the hardness of his heart, never mourned over his inability to walk in the ways of holiness, it must appear like vision and madness to talk of being enlightened, and renewed, and strengthened in the inner man by the Holy Spirit. And indeed this doctrine is become ridiculous. It is become the very mark and badge of religious frenzy. As soon as you mention any work of the Holy Spirit, you are supposed to be a little turned in the head; and if you dare maintain the necessity of his grace, you are quite given over. And this shame and reproach is hard to bear. Many persons, who in their consciences assent to the doctrine, are terrified from owning it, for fear of the world, and thereby lose all its comforts. I am acquainted with several persons in this unhappy state. God grant you may be all free from it. But as it is a common temptation, with which it is probable every Christian will be tried, it will therefore be proper to consider it.

This is, I suppose, your state. You assent in your minds to the truth of the doctrine, but dare not own it, for fear of being called enthusiasts. What weakness is this? Consider well what you lose by being afraid of a nickname. Can any thing be more weak and foolish, than to set out alone upon your journey for eternity, and to reject the only guide who can direct you safe, because you will be ridiculed for following his directions; and so for fear of being laughed at, you blunder on in the wrong way, until you fall at last into the pit of destruction? And then how will this reflection add to your misery, that you had no temptation to reject the Holy Spirit's guidance, but the ridicule of the world. The Scripture assured you, that he was your only guide, and you believed it. The church of England taught you to pray to him, and to seek him for your only guide, and you assented to her doctrines. And yet you gave up the Scripture, gave up the doctrines of your own church, for fear of a nickname; nay more, you gave up your hopes of eternal glory. Good God, what magic is there in a name, that it should charm you out of heaven! How dreadful is reproach, if it should terrify you more than hell! Should not we have thought it unaccountable, if we did not see it every day, that a hard name, which is but a sound and nothing more, should work so wonderfully upon the mind. But, men and brethren, use your reason. Will you give up all that is dear and valuable to avoid a nickname? Will you lose all the graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit for fear of being called an enthusiast? Certainly you cannot act so weak and wicked a part, and you will not if you fly to the Holy Spirit for grace, whenever you find reproach like to stagger your faith. He will enable you to overcome the temptation, if you seek his strength. He can so arm you with might in the inner man, that the ridicule of the world will make no impression upon you; nay, he can make it sweet, he will enable you even to bear it and love it. God grant you may now seek his strength. Oh that he may now be present among you with his almighty grace, and dispose every one of you to take him for your guide through the journey of life, and then he will fill your hearts with that perfect love of God, which will cast out the fear of men.

But if you are not affected with these motives, if you still see no necessity for being guided by the blessed Spirit, would to God I could discover the secret springs of your hearts, and turn them to that adorable person, whose grace alone

can make you happy. Oh that I could convince you so far, as to put you this moment upon seeking the gracious guidance of the eternal Spirit. But this is his own work. We must plead, and intreat, and importune you to seek his assistance, but the success must come from him. The word itself is but a dead letter unless he animate it; and therefore the preaching of it can have no power, unless he accompany it. We may plant and water, but he must give the increase. Oh that it may be abundant this day to the glory of Jesus Christ. And all of you who desire it, will join your hearts with mine in requesting it of him.

O almighty God, who as at this time did teach the hearts of thy faithful people by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit, send, we beseech thee, the same Spirit to enlighten our understandings, that we may have a right judgment in all things, and may his grace operate with power upon our hearts, softening their hard stony nature, and making them willing to obey the law of God; and then grant that he may finish this great work, by enabling us to proceed in the ways of holiness, until we happily end the journey of life. Oh may the eternal Spirit come down upon this whole congregation, and enlighten, and renew, and strengthen every one of us in the inner man, that we may now and evermore rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Spirit, three persons of equal honour, and glory, and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen.*

A SERMON

PREACHED

AT ST. ANNE'S, BLACKFRIARS, ON SUNDAY, SEPT. 30, 1764.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Gal. vi. 14.

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.—2 Cor. iv. 5.

THE apostle speaks these words of himself, and of Timothy. He is clearing their office and their character from the charges brought against them by some false teachers in the church of Corinth. In the foregoing chapter, he has been comparing the ministry of the law with the ministry of the gospel, and stating the difference between them. The law was written on tables of stone, and was the ministration of death, and of condemnation, but the gospel was written upon the fleshly tables of the heart, being the ministration of the Spirit, and of righteousness, and therefore whatever glory the law had, the gospel did far exceed it in glory. Paul and Timothy, being appointed preachers of this most glorious gospel, and having received this ministry, did not faint through any difficulty or opposition, nor did they labour in it upon any corrupt, selfish motives: for they renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, every base principle that would not bear the light, not walking in craftiness with an intention through subtlety to cheat their hearers, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, on purpose to deceive and beguile unstable souls; but they acted openly and honestly, by manifestation of the truth commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, making the truth so plain, and their views in preaching it so noble and disinterested, that every man's conscience rightly informed must approve of them: but, however, God saw the secrets of their hearts, and to him they could appeal for the uprightness of their motives; so that if there were any who did not receive their gospel, it was their own fault, and was a sad proof of their being in a lost state: for if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them who are lost, who are under the power of the devil and of unbelief, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of

them that believe not: this is the grand stratagem of Satan. Wherever the gospel comes, he tries to blind and harden men's minds against it, knowing well that if the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them there would be an end of his reign; therefore he labours with wiles and force to shut out the light of the gospel, that he may continue to rule in the evil heart of unbelief. But, blessed be God, the preaching of the gospel is the means of dethroning Satan: he fears no weapon formed against him but the two-edged sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With this he has been defeated thousands and thousands of times; for it is the appointed instrument of bringing sinners out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And the Lord works this mighty deliverance by the preaching of the gospel. When the able ministers of the New Testament have a single eye to Christ, and aim solely at his glory, then the Holy Spirit sets in with their words, and according to his office glorifies Christ in the understanding, and in the hearts of the hearers. Of this, St. Paul had long and happy experience. He was enabled to renounce self in all his ministrations, and to exalt Jesus. We preach not ourselves—we disclaim self in all its shapes—we renounce self-seeking and self-pleasing—we abhor selfish views—we would have self debased; and in all our preaching, we would have self brought to nought, that Christ may be ALL in ALL. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." Of his wonderful person, God-man—of his gracious undertakings —of his divine offices—of his finished salvation—of his almighty power and faithfulness to carry all the purposes of his love into execution, that his people may be receiving out of his fulness grace in time, and glory in eternity:—of these things we would be telling all the day long. He is the subject matter, his glory is the end and aim of all our preaching; and if he be but glorified and souls won to him, we have reward enough. His love constraineth us to love him, the head of the body, and to love all his members, for his sake ready to do any good office to the souls or bodies of mankind. "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake, willing to do, willing to suffer any thing for you, to spend and be spent, yea, not counting our lives dear to ourselves, so that we may but finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." The apostle's words, thus in part opened and explained, will be suitable to the present occasion in these two views,

First, As they relate more immediately to ministers, and

Secondly, To their people.

Under the first head, these particulars offer themselves to our consideration,

First, Paul and Timothy did not preach themselves, but

Secondly, They preached Christ Jesus the Lord, and

Thirdly, Themselves servants to the Corinthians for Jesus' sake. And may the grace of our God enable us so to meditate upon these points, that self may be humbled and the Saviour exalted: For

First, Paul and Timothy did not, and ministers ought not, to preach themselves. They ought not to have an eye to self in any part of their work. Self is a wrong object. It cannot be looked at without forgetting Christ, or made any thing of without degrading Christ. Where self is an idol, Christ is become nothing. Therefore a minister, whose heart is devoted to Christ, and would with his lips and life glorify him, is ever afraid of self. In his preaching he would not aim at those things which feed and nourish selfishness, such as

Fame, which is an universal passion. Self loves to be esteemed, and to be called of men, rabbi, great, and noble, and learned, and good. There is nothing which our corrupt nature covets more than to be well spoken of, and to have every body's good word: for this applause wonderfully feeds all our selfish tempers. But this St. Paul was enabled to renounce for Christ. He was once a famous scholar, but he lost his character for determining to know nothing but Jesus and him crucified. He had once great reputation for holiness, but there was an end of it when he came to his—"God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He did not desire now to be admired for a fine orator, nor did he preach for this end, that his hearers might be

pleased with him, and go away pleased with themselves, but he was bold for God to speak plain truths, which he knew would offend those who were living, and wanted to live, in their sins. When he insisted upon the doctrine of the cross, which is to them that perish foolishness, then bad designs were imputed to him, and the abandoned sinner and the self-righteous Pharisee agreed to look upon him as the scum of the world, and the offscouring of all things. And this he did not deserve, he did not seek it; but he met with it in the service of Christ. It was the reproach of Christ, brought upon him for serving such a master, and heightened for his being so like his master. And yet in this Paul could rejoice —not only bear it, but also glory in it. He received it as an honour, and found it a blessing to be evil spoken of for Jesus' sake. He was happy in bringing sinners to think and speak well of Jesus, whatever evil some might think and speak of him for it. O for more of this self-denying spirit. May the Lord pull down self in all his ministers, that Jesus alone may be exalted in them, and by them, and that they may not study in their ministry filthy lucre, any more than basely purchase fame.

This is another selfish principle. The love of money, which is the root of all evil, is deeply rooted in every man's heart. They all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter; but by the grace of God, Paul was of another mind. In his doctrine he insists upon it, to Timothy and Titus, that ministers should not be given to filthy lucre, and in his example he showed that he was not given to it himself. When he went to Ephesus, he did not go upon any sordid motive, such, as How much a year shall I get by preaching at that place? His view was very exalted—How shall I serve the cause of Jesus, and his dear-bought people there? Accordingly he says to the Ephesians, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel, yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me." As he was a preacher of the gospel he had a right to live of the gospel, yet he waived his right, and chose rather to work at his trade, than it should be said he preached for gain. Christ being his Saviour, and the unsearchable riches of Christ his portion and his inheritance, he had enough. For he had not only the promise of spiritual, but also of temporal things, such as the love of Christ knew best for him; and he found Christ so faithful, that he learned in whatever state he was therewith to be content, content to be abased, to be hungry, and to suffer need, yea content to suffer the loss of all things, counting them but dross and dung, that he might win Christ. And having won him, the pearl of great price, he was willing to part with his ease, as well as fame and riches, for Jesus' sake.

This is another very selfish principle We all love ease and self-indulgence. Our nature abhors the least suffering. What noble views, then, must Paul have been actuated by, since he knew, that in every city bonds and afflictions did abide him, and yet none of these things did move him! How dear and precious must Christ have been to him, since the continual cross could not drive him from preaching the gospel of Christ! He made a mere slave of his body, denying it the dearest gratifications, even lawful ones, and laying upon it the heaviest burdens and crosses, when his Lord's cause required these things at his hands. Like a good soldier he endured hardship, was in perils often, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Such was his flaming love to him who had called him to be a soldier, that no suffering could make him leave the service. He fought on bravely, strong in the Lord, till the battle being won, the Captain of his salvation granted him his discharge, and put upon his head a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Thus Paul made it appear that he did not preach himself. He renounced those things which are dearest to self, and showed how much he loved Jesus, by willingly parting with applause, and riches, and ease for his sake, "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," which is the

Second particular to be considered. St. Paul disclaimed self, that he might exalt the Saviour. He did this from a true heart-felt attachment to Jesus. "When it pleased God," says he, "to reveal his Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." From that time forward he became enamoured

with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Paul found Christ revealed to him so precious, he saw such wonderful beauty and matchless loveliness in him, such an infinite fulness, and such a readiness to communicate out of it all spiritual blessings; yea, he himself enjoyed so many of them, that other things were nothing, and Christ was ALL. He had won Paul's heart. He had discovered so much of himself, that Paul was become in body and soul devoted to him, and cared not what he suffered so that he could but please his Lord and Saviour. To his honour he had an eye in all his ministerial labours, setting forth the perfect freeness, the rich fulness, and the everlasting glory of his salvation. We preach Jesus; that name is full of grace: for he was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins. They had all turned away from God and his law, as the prophet says, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way," and this was the way of sin, according to the apostle, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," they had all robbed God of his glory by transgressing his law, so that there was none righteous, no not one; and thereby they had rendered themselves liable to those threatened pains and penalties which justice was bound to inflict: for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. From this state of sin and misery Jesus came to save his people; and this he undertook in the covenant of the eternal Three, in which, being a person co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, he agreed to stand up as the head and surety of his people, in their nature and in their stead to keep the law for them, and to suffer the pains and penalties of it for them, that by his obedience unto death, the law and justice of his Father might be infinitely and everlastingly glorified in saving all those who should believe in him from sin, and death, and hell, and in admitting them to life and glory. In the fulness of time he came to fulfil what he had undertaken, and the Word was made flesh. "Lo, I come," saith he, "to do thy will, O God:" to do it in my life, to suffer it in my death, and thereby to bring an everlasting righteousnes for my people. The Father accepted him as their surety, witnessing by a voice from heaven—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and witnessing also that as their surety he had finished the work which he had given him to do, when he declared him to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead, and when he put all things under his feet, and gave him all power in heaven and earth, that he might be able to save sinners to the uttermost—were they ever so far from God that he might bring them nigh—if they had sinned to the uttermost, so far that one step more they would have been in hell, yet he could save them still with his great salvation: for he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, that the worst and vilest may in him be saved from all their sins, no sins being so sinful, so numerous, but there is redemption from all through faith in his blood, no state of guilt so desperate, but he can bestow grace, that sin shall not be imputed, and that righteousness, even the righteousness of God shall be imputed. Such a Saviour is Jesus, exalted to this office by the covenant of grace, and acting in it by the full commission of the eternal Three, by whom he was constituted the Christ. Thus saith the Father, "God the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth, I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people."—With Christ the covenant was made, by him it was to be made good, and therefore the second person in the Godhead was truly united unto him, and God and man was one Christ, and the Holy Spirit was poured upon him without measure to fit and qualify him for his work, that he might become the Saviour of his people, as their prophet, priest, and king; for which offices he was divinely commissioned and consecrated, and therefore was called the Christ, or the anointed one of God.

As he was the great High Priest of our profession, he was called of God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin: and he gave himself, his Godhead, his manhood, as the surety of his people, to his Father's law, that whatever demands of obedience it had upon them, he might answer and pay them all, to the end that by his obedience they might be made righteous. And he gave himself as their surety to his Father's justice, that whatever demands of sufferings it had

upon them, he might endure them all, and accordingly the Lord laid upon him the sins of all his people. He knew no sin. He was in himself just, when he suffered for the unjust, and therefore all his sufferings were upon their account. He was bearing their griefs and carrying their sorrows in every part of his passion. For them he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He felt what the sins of their souls deserved, when he cried out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and he felt the sins of the bodies, and the burden forced him to sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. They were bound with the chains of sin, and ought to have been bound with chains of everlasting darkness, therefore when Jesus was apprehended they took him and bound him. For that shame which was due to their sins he turned not away his face from shame and spitting, nor his cheeks from them that plucked off the hair. He was buffeted and scourged, and stricken for their transgressions, that by his stripes they might be healed. For the sins of their heads, his holy head was crowned with thorns. Their feet were swift to run into sin, and their hands mighty to commit it, therefore when the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of them all, his feet and his hands were pierced through with nails. There never was sorrow like unto that sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger, when he endured the curse to redeem his people from the curse of the law, when he was forsaken of God, that they who deserved to be forsaken for ever might be brought nigh to God, and when he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost, dying for them that they might live with God for ever. Thus he was made sin for them who knew no sin, and thus he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and by this alone can it be put away. God hath laid no other foundation for the salvation of sinners, than the finished work, the life and death, the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. When you heard the minister just now give notice that the sacrament would be administered next Sunday, he said, it was in remembrance of the meritorious cross and passion of Christ, "whereby alone," mind that, "whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven," whereby alone we are saved from hell, and entitled to heaven. Whatever grace or glory God the Father gives to any poor sinners he gives it on this account, and on nothing else. He looks only at what his Son did and suffered, when he vouchsafes to bring any of them from darkness to light, and from sin to righteousness. He sees them in his Son, and accepts them in the Beloved. They stand at his bar in the righteousness of his Son, and are therefore justified from all things. He views them in the graces and loveliness of his Son, and they appear not only without spot or blemish, or any such thing, but also fair as the moon, clear as the sun—complete in Jesus: and therefore it is owing to the precious gifts, and infinitely meritorious offerings of the great High Priest of our profession Christ Jesus, and to these alone, that any sinners are pardoned and saved; because there is salvation in none other, either person or thing.

But because this way of salvation through faith in a crucified Saviour was a stumbling block unto the Jews, and unto the Greeks foolishness, and is not received to this day except by those to whom it is given, therefore the Lord Christ sustains another gracious office, and is the great teacher of his people. He is the divine prophet of whom it is written, "In the latter days they shall be all taught of God;" for by his word and Spirit he brings his people to an heart-felt discovery of their own guilty state and ruined nature, and teaches them the infinite sufficiency of his finished work, and enables them with the heart to rest upon it, as the alone foundation of present peace and of eternal joy. This is the great lesson which he has to teach us, as our prophet, and none can teach it but himself. Men may give one another some notion of the way of salvation, but they can go no farther. Christ only can teach as never man taught. The words which he speaks, they are spirit, and they are life. The Spirit accompanies them with his divine power and energy, and by them he quickens the soul that was before dead in trespasses and sins. He speaks life into the dead, and the life which he gives, being from him, is to bring the soul to him, that it may be kept alive by living upon his fulness: for this Jesus is the Christ, consecrated of God to be the great Prophet of his people, and made of God unto them

wisdom, that he might instruct them all in saving knowledge, by bringing them to rest wholly by faith upon his life and death for every grace and every blessing.

And because there is in our fallen nature a proneness to turn from Jesus, and to rest upon something besides him alone for righteousness and strength, and for a comfortable and holy walk heavenwards, therefore Jesus is the almighty King to rule in and over his people, and to manage all their matters, spiritual and temporal, for them. And for this purpose he has all power in heaven and earth, that whatever would turn them from him, enemies within or without, he might be able to subdue them all. Having brought them to himself, and fixed them upon the foundation, he is the Christ, the consecrated King to keep them there by his almighty arm. They are now become his lawful subjects, and no enemy, not even the gates of hell, shall pluck them out of his hands; and they know it, and are therefore safe and happy. Surely, can they say, in the Lord have we strength. In the midst of their weakness and helplessness he makes his strength perfect, the excellency of it never appearing so manifest, as when he keeps them sensible that without him they can do nothing, and yet then enables them through him to do all things.

Happy are the people who are in such a case, yea, blessed are the people who have Jesus Christ for their King; because he is the Lord, that is, Jehovah, we preach Christ Jesus the Lord. This crowns all. Jesus is Jehovah, one of the eternal Three in the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, possessed of all the divine attributes and perfections. All his works are perfect, infinitely, everlastingly perfect. His work of salvation is absolutely complete. Jehovah hath laid the foundation. Jehovah hath brought forth the top stone. It is the masterpiece of his wisdom, and power, and love, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing may be taken away: for God was in Christ, and finished the work. "Thus saith the Lord, I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Saviour;" no Jesus, therefore Jesus is Jehovah; as he says himself to the Jews—"If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins." Now none can forgive sins but God only, and therefore Jesus must be God, because he had power upon earth to forgive sins. The prophet Isaiah says, "Unto us a child is born, and he shall be called the mighty God"—mind, the child was God, the infant child just born was the almighty God—according to the apostle, "God over all blessed for ever." This is the fundamental article of our religion. Take this away, Christians are as great idolaters as they are who worship stocks and stones: for if Jesus be not Jehovah, if God and man be not in him one Christ, of what idolatry have you been guilty of this morning? The whole litany is a prayer to Christ. In the creeds which you have been repeating, you have acknowledged his Godhead. In the liturgy are these words:—"The same that we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the glory of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality." Therefore against all opposers we must insist upon the equality of the Persons in the Godhead. We must preach Christ Jesus the Lord—Jesus a perfect Saviour, consecrated to his office by the covenant of the eternal Three, and acting in it, as the great High Priest, who was to offer gifts and sacrifices for the sins of his people, and to teach them, as their prophet, to rely wholly upon him for the infinite and everlasting efficacy of these gifts and offerings to take away sin, and to obtain salvation; and to trust to his royal power that they might be kept by it, until they should receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. And we are to insist upon it, that Jesus is the Christ, able to fulfil all those offices, because he is Jehovah, the Lord God omnipotent, who therefore took flesh and was made man, that as man's surety he might live and die for him, making in his life and death reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. This was the Lord's doing; whose works are like himself. They are all infinite, and therefore the salvation of our God is everlastingly perfect. And it is offered freely in the gospel, not to him that worketh, but to him that believeth, which shows the rich fulness and absolute sufficiency of it. Is not that plainly a divine liberality which can make such a free grant as this? Whosoever will, let him come and take the grace of God, and the glory of God freely. And observe to whom the free grant is made

—to any that will receive it. To any sinner, be he ever so vile, if he be black as hell, heavy laden with a burden that would sink thousands of thousands of souls into the bottomless pit, labouring under the guilt of sins as numerous as the sand upon the sea-shore, to such an one is the word of this salvation sent. He may come just as he is: for all things are ready, ready for sinners, yea, for the chief, to cleanse, to justify, to sanctify, to glorify them. Whoever he be, he that believeth shall be saved, and shall be kept by the power of God through faith, until he be made a partaker of the eternal salvation of God.

Thus we preach Christ Jesus the Lord, directing sinners to look nowhere but to him—"Behold the Lamb of God." Look unto him, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. And this is the good news of the gospel, which after ministers have experienced themselves, then will they be able clearly and feelingly to preach it to others; for then the love of Christ will constrain them. The work of the ministry may be hard, the difficulties many and great, but his love in their hearts will make them willing to do, and suffer any thing for his glory, and for the good of his people, which is the

Third particular under this head to be considered. If we mention any thing about ourselves, it is to humble self, and to bring honour to Jesus—"ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." In this ordinance of preaching, and in all our ministerial labours, we are not lords but servants, servants to our great Lord and Master, to whom we ought always to have an eye, and to whom we must give an account; and servants also to you, bound to perform every good office, ready to every work and labour of love, which may promote your spiritual and eternal interest: for this end we have given up ourselves to serve the Lord Christ, and have devoted ourselves to your service for his sake: so that we ought to refuse no difficulty or trouble, which his glory or your profit require of us. But in whatever case one or both these ends cannot be promoted, we are acting quite out of character, if we engage in it. And for this reason I have not been able to behave towards you in the common way of soliciting for your favour. Some have insinuated it was from pride, that I would not go about the parish from house to house canvassing for votes; but truly it was another motive. I could not see how this could promote the glory of God. How can it be for the honour of Jesus, that his ministers, who have renounced fame, and riches, and ease, should be most anxious and earnest in the pursuit of those very things which they have renounced? Surely this would be getting into a worldly spirit, as much as is the spirit of parliamenteering. And as this method of canvassing cannot be for Jesus' sake, so neither is it for our honour: it is far beneath our function: nor is it for your profit. What good is it to your souls? What compliment to your understandings? What advantage to you in any shape to be directed and applied to by every person with whom you have any connexion, or on whom you have any dependence? Is not this depriving you of the freedom of your choice? Determined by these motives, when my friends, of their own accord, put me up as a candidate, to whom I have to this hour made no application, directly or indirectly, I left you to yourselves. If you do choose me, I desire to be your servant for Jesus' sake; and if you do not, the will of the Lord be done.

From what hath been said upon the text it appears, that not self, but Christ Jesus the Lord, is to be preached. Our subject matter is his nature, God-man, full of grace and truth in all his offices. When God was manifest in the flesh, he was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins; and he was Jesus the Christ, chosen to this office in the covenant of the eternal Three, and consecrated to be the great teacher and prophet of his church, able by his word and Spirit to make manifest the secrets of the heart, discovering to a man his own fallen state, his guilt, and his misery, and making him so to feel these things, as to be forced to go out of himself for salvation; and also to make manifest to him, how he may be saved through faith in the blood and righteousness of a crucified Saviour, by and in him alone can be had forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Upon this foundation Jesus is able to establish and ground the soul, because he has all power in heaven and earth for that very purpose; as God-man he reigneth over all, King of kings, and Lord of lords, until all his enemies be made his footstool. Not one enemy, not one sin

shall have dominion over them, who live by the faith of the Son of God; yea, he will so rule over them, that they shall be preserved from all evil, and he will make all things work together for their good. And for the glory of Christ in these his offices he bestows his blessings freely:—the most ignorant he teaches, the greatest sinners he justifies, the most helpless he keeps by his mighty power. He is the Saviour of such, not for any merit in them that is or can be, but to the praise of his own grace. He is able to do all this, because he is Jehovah, to whom all things are possible; and he does it because it is his office, his honour to save. He is Jesus, the Saviour, and he is the Christ, the consecrated Saviour, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead, that he might be able to save to the uttermost, yea, that he might be the author of eternal salvation. This is the gospel which has been preached with success by many faithful ministers in this place, whose names are still remembered with honour; and this gospel is to this day preached unto you, and we desire to deliver it faithfully, that you may receive it profitably, which brings me to the

Second general head of discourse, namely, to the application to the hearers, which consists in receiving the truths delivered. Preaching is the ordinance of God, which he has appointed, and by which he acts. On which account it is not an indifferent matter, but is either the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death; therefore our Lord requires you to take heed how you hear, when Christ is evidently set forth in the preaching of the gospel. My word, says he, shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it. The Spirit accompanying it makes it effectual for the accomplishing of what the Lord pleases, and by his mighty working in the word, faith cometh, and Christ is received. The soul, which was dead, is made alive by the word of life—which was in darkness, is enlightened, when the light of the glorious gospel shines into it—which was in guilt, is acquitted by believing the word of righteousness—which was mourning, is made joyful through patience and comfort of the scriptures—which being on the foundation yet could do nothing to build up itself, is edified and built up by the word of grace in its most holy faith. Thus by and in the word the Spirit acts, and Christ is received into the judgment, the believer clearly apprehends him, the conscience is satisfied with him, and sees in his life and death enough to be saved from condemnation, and to be entitled to heaven; the will chooses him, the heart embraces him, and the whole man is influenced to give up himself to be governed by the grace of Jesus, that in spirituals, in temporals, for time and for eternity, Jesus may be ALL, and IN ALL.

Now, sirs, we therefore preach Christ Jesus the Lord, that you may thus receive him, and be happy in him. We would glorify him in our preaching, that his Spirit may thus glorify him in your hearts and lives. And has he done this for you? Examine; for it is of infinite moment. What does it signify to you, how glorious Christ is in the eyes of others, if he be not so in yours? How blessed he makes them, if you be not blessed in him? You will be no better for their views of Christ, and for their happiness in him. Oh think then, why it is that Christ, who is infinitely, inestimably, everlastingly precious, is not precious to you. Is it not because you do not believe? For the scripture declares, "to them that believe he is precious." And what keeps you under the power of unbelief? Is it not written, that the god of this world blindeth the minds of them that believe not? He deludes the judgment and hardens the heart through the deceitfulness of sin, insomuch that they are content with the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, and while these delight, they feel not their want of a Saviour. If there be any who hear me now in this dreadful case, oh think how much you will one day want him! In the time of distress, when the law accuses, conscience condemns, and you see the wrath of God to be your due—when the arrows of the Almighty stick deep in you, and his law presseth you sore—how exceedingly desirable will Jesus the Saviour then be? But supposing this day of conviction never come, yet it is appointed unto all men once to die: how will you appear and stand at God's bar? With sin unpardoned? Alas! there is then no way left to escape—your sentence is upon record—Go, thou cursed, into eternal fire, &c. Sirs, before it be too late, think of these things, and may

God put it into your heart so to think of them, that you may flee from the wrath to come.

Whenever it shall please God thus to make you sensible of your want of a Saviour, or if he has already been thus gracious unto you—remember, sirs, that Jesus Christ is the Lord Jehovah, and that in our nature he has wrought out a finished salvation. Here is your object. The command is: look unto Jesus, see in him all fulness dwelling, and for the use of such sinners as you are. The enemy will try all his wiles and malice to keep you from Jesus, and your legal, unbelieving hearts will help him mightily; but consider what a free grant he has made in the gospel of all the blessings of his salvation. He requires no condition of you, wants no qualification in you. Take what he offers. Receive it, and it is yours. All is by free gift. Christ himself is a gift, and so is grace, righteousness, holiness, and heaven. All good things are the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. What can be a greater encouragement? The salvation finished in all its parts is offered and made good, not to him that worketh, but to him that believeth. And therefore whoever or whatever you are in your own eyes, yet Jesus Christ came into the world to save such. This is a faithful saying, that he came to save the chief of sinners. This is worthy to be received. It has the honourable testimony of God himself, and therefore surely you may receive it, and depend upon it. Come, for all things are now ready; and you shall be saved freely by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

If you are a convinced sinner, make what objections you can against yourself, they are all answered in the gospel. Say you are a great sinner, but not so great as Jesus is a Saviour. Perhaps you are old in sin, yet his mercies are from everlasting to everlasting. Suppose your sins are numerous as the stars, far infinitely more are his mercies. Say you are very deep in guilt, what scarlet crimson sins cannot his blood wash clean? If thou hadst all the sins of earth and hell upon thy guilty soul, yet it is written, "He that believeth shall be justified from all things." Oh that you may not stand reasoning against the infinite sufficiency of Jesus to save. All things are possible to Jesus, and so are all things possible to him that believeth. Be not faithless, then, but believing: may it be given thee to believe in the only begotten Son of God.

If this be thy happy case, then thou art already a partaker of the precious gift of faith. Jesus is still thy object. Look unto him for all things. They are treasured up in his fulness, and all received by believing. Thy safety, thy victories, thy holy walk, thy comforts and joys, these come unto thee and are enjoyed by faith. He is thy all-perfect Saviour; and he being thine, all he has, and all he is, is thine also. He has made them over to thee in the free grant of the gospel, and all the perfections of the Godhead stand engaged to keep thee in possession of them: therefore walk close to Christ and live up to thy privileges, and see thou stop not short of any thing promised, which will be to his glory, and to thy comfort. There are unsearchable riches of grace in Jesus, full authority in Christ, and absolute power in Jehovah to bestow them. Whatever grace thou wantest at any time, thou wilt honour Jesus Christ the Lord, if thou wilt by faith live upon him for the receiving it: and thou wilt infallibly receive it according to thy faith. Believe in him for safety, for righteousness, for holiness, for happiness; and as thou believest, so shall it be done unto thee—thou shalt have all that thou canst ask, yea more than thou canst think. May this be the happy case of all who hear me to-day. If I never stand up any more in this place, may we all so know and believe in Christ Jesus the Lord, that we may be found in that happy number who shall ascribe honour, glory, and blessing, and power, to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, to whom be equal praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF THE

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER,

BRIEFLY STATED.

Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.—John vi. 53.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following short Treatise was drawn up at the request of a charitable lady and published for the benefit of the poor. The design of it was to open to them the nature and use of the Holy Sacrament; and it was thought the most proper method not to be large and full upon the subject, but to lay it before them in one view, that they might understand it more easily, and remember it the better. Reader! before thou openest it, ask Him, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, to accompany thy perusal of it with his grace and blessing; and if it be of any service to thee, give the glory to God! and pray for the author,

W. ROMAINE.

THE sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained by Christ himself. Before his passion, he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave it to his disciples, as the outward and visible sign of his body broken; and he took wine and blessed it, and gave it to them, as the outward and visible sign of his blood poured out, and shed for the sins of the world. And then he commanded them, and us, to continue to do the same in remembrance of him; so that we must first know what we are to remember of him in this ordinance, before we can keep it aright. We must consider the scope and design of it; for what end Christ left us these memorials of his body and blood; upon what motive he required us to partake of them; and what benefit we are to receive thereby. For these reasons it is of great consequence clearly to understand the nature and use of the Lord's Supper. Reader! I hope thou seest the importance of it in a strong light. May God give thee a right judgment in this weighty matter. Consider, then, that

I. *You have an immortal spirit within you, whose life of happiness depends as much upon God the Father of spirits, as your body does upon the food and elements of this world.*—Moses has given us this account of the two parts of which man is composed: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a livig soul." Gen. ii. 7. The bodily part was formed of the dust of the ground, but the spiritual part was immediately infused, and breathed from God; and as they had a different original, so they go to different places: when the body dies, it returns to dust, but the spirit, the breath of life, returns to God that gave it. While man continued innocent, his soul had a life of happiness dependent upon God; for as it is created, it must be dependent, and its life must be supported by that Being, on whom it depends. And this being is God: "For with thee is the fountain of life," says the Psalmist, Psal. xxxvi. 9. All spiritual life flows from God, as from its proper fountain, and is supported by a vital union with him, as much as the body is supported by a vital union with the food and elements of this world: what these are to the life of the body, that is God to the life of the soul, "for he holdeth our souls in life," Psal. lxvi. 9. He holdeth and maintaineth the soul in its spiritual life. And when there was no sin in the world, it was an happy life. So long as all things continued very good, the soul enjoyed sweet and blessed communion

with God. It walked in the light of his countenance, and the sense of his continual presence filled it with peace and love and joy. But this happy state of things did not last long: for

II. *Your soul lost this life of happiness by sin.*—The whole book of God proves this truth. In express words it says, that fallen man is "alienated from the life of God," Eph. iv. 18; being estranged from that life which God hath given to and supported in man, while he continued innocent. Upon sins entering into the world, the sentence took place—"dying thou shalt die;" the body became mortal, and the soul was alienated from that divine support wherein its life of happiness consisted, and died from God, which is the worst kind of death. The vital union between him and the soul was broken; "for your sins have separated between you and your God," Isa. lix. 2; they have separated between you and the fountain of life; they have cut off all communion with him; by which means, being dead in trespasses and sins, which we all are by nature, the soul is as dead to the offices of spiritual life as a cold lifeless corpse is to the offices of animal life.

If these scriptures do not appear to you with convincing evidence, consult matter of fact. How is the case with your own soul? Were not you by nature dead to God? If not, then you were always alive to the things of God. From your very infancy you took no delight in childish diversions, much less in sin, in pride, in envy, in lying, and swearing, or in any act of uncleanness; but your heart was full of love to God, and every expression of that love was delightful. You knew no joy like that of prayer. To be continually pouring out your praise and thanksgiving to your Creator, was your heaven—the world so dead to you, that its strongest temptations had no force. Wealth and honour, and pleasure, and whatever is called great and mighty, had no charms compared with devotion. Say, was this always the sweet and holy frame of your soul from the first dawning and opening of reason? Was your heart always thus full of love to God, and always thus happy in communion with him? Were your affections never drawn away by any worldly objects, whereby you robbed God of that continual service of all your faculties, which was his due? Can you lay claim to this perfect uninterrupted obedience? Surely you will not; for what man is he that liveth, and sinneth not? Nay, what man is there that has not found a coldness and deadness of his affections when he tried to fix them upon God, and the things of God? Have not you found it in yourself? Do you not now find it? Try, then, to pray for three or four hours together without one wandering thought. You cannot. Why, then, these are evident proofs that your soul is alienated from the life of God, and

III. *You have no power in yourself to recover this life of God in the soul.*—The law runs in this style:—"the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Death is the wages of sin; you have sinned; for all have sinned; and God is just to give you your wages. He has promised them, and he is faithful and true to fulfil his promises. He must fulfil them, unless you can by some means be restored to his favour, and recover the life of grace in the soul; for if there be truth in God, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." But you can do nothing to merit the recovery of this life, because your whole nature is sinful and guilty. You are in the state of a condemned malefactor, with this peculiar circumstance of distress, that you have not even a desire to apply for pardon. Your soul is so absolutely enslaved to sin, that it loves its prison and its dungeon. Every faculty is under the bondage of Satan, and able to work out nothing but sin. In this state you are utterly helpless and miserable. "Your condition is such," as our church, in her tenth article, expresses it, "that you cannot turn and prepare yourself," and much less attain, "by your own natural strength, to faith and calling upon God: the grace of Christ must go before, to give you a good will, and then work with you when you have that good will." The first good motion of the will comes from Christ, even the desire to live unto God is his free gift; and every step is his work, until the life of God be perfected in the soul. He only, whose voice is to call the dead out of their graves, can call to the sinner, and be obeyed, "awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." Christ, and Christ only, has life to give

to the dead in sin. The fancied light of nature, the religion of nature, morality, learning, arts, and sciences, these with all other natural and acquired talents, can no more revive a dead sinner than they can create a world. The conviction of this truth is absolutely necessary; for you can never apply to Christ for the free gift of his divine life until you be perfectly convinced that you want it, and that you can do nothing to merit it. You can have no motive to apply to him until you find your own helplessness; and therefore, if you never saw your want of this divine life, intreat him to show you your deadness in sin. Beg of him to open the eyes of your understanding, that you may be able to see in what a wretched dead state you have been all your days, and may be thereby stirred up to pray, with strong crying and tears, to the Prince of life, that he would raise you from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness: for,

IV. *Jesus Christ came into the world to recover for sinners that life of happiness which they had forfeited.*—The scriptures are full of this truth, from beginning to end. Jesus Christ is there set forth as the almighty Saviour and Redeemer, who "giveth life unto the world." He was the eternal and self-existent God, equal in every perfection and attribute with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and he was pleased, out of his infinite mercy and love, to be united to our nature; by which union God and man became one Christ; so that he who obeyed the law, suffered, and died for us, was truly a divine and infinite person. By his obedience he atoned for our breach of the divine law; by his sufferings he freed us from the punishment due to the breach of it; and he died that we might "live through him" (1 John iv 9) a life of grace in this world, and a life of glory for ever in heaven, whereby what he said of himself might be fulfilled: "I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John x. 10.

This is the scripture account of the gracious method by which our forfeited life was restored. It is the free gift of Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and glory. He is the Lord God omnipotent, who created the heavens and the earth, and without whom was not any thing made that was made. He gave us our life at first. And when it was forfeited by sin, he came from heaven to redeem it: so that we owe him a double debt of gratitude. It was wonderful love that he should create us at first out of nothing; but more wonderful that he should come down from heaven to lay down his own life a ransom for ours. This love surpasseth all understanding. Men who have never tasted it can form no estimate of it; and they who have tasted it by faith, acknowledge it to be greater than heart can conceive, or tongue can utter. However, they know all that can be understood of it in the present world; for faith receives this spiritual life from Jesus Christ. Faith is that divine grace planted in the soul by the Holy Spirit, whereby it is vitally united to Jesus Christ, and receives support from him to begin, carry on, and perfect its spiritual life: and this brings me to prove that,

V. *Faith receives from Jesus Christ the spiritual life, which he came to give unto the world.*—Faith, as a Christian grace, is widely different from an historical assent; for it does not only believe that Christ has life to give to a sinful world, but also receives it from him. This is essential to a true living faith, which is a vital uniting principle, and by which the believer is intimately joined to Christ, and draws supplies of nourishment from him, for the support of his spiritual life. The following scriptures prove it to be of the essence of true faith to receive this life from Christ. "These are written," says St. John, xx. 31, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." "I am the resurrection and the life," saith the Lord, John xi. 25; "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die;" for he shall be as closely connected with the root and stock of all spiritual life as the branches of the vine are with the root. "I am the vine," saith the Lord of life; "ye are the branches: as the branch cannot live, and bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." By believing, we abide in him; for faith is the bond of this union. It engrafts us into Christ, who is the

root and stock of our spiritual life. In him we live; from him we receive nourishment, and are enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. This is the happy state of Christians, who believe on the Son of God, and have everlasting life; but miserable beyond conception is the state of those who are not united to him; for he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. John iii. 36.

These scriptures clearly prove that faith is the hand which God enables us to put forth, and by which we lay hold of Christ, and life in him. The blessed apostle Paul had happy experience of this doctrine: he relates it in these remarkable words, Gal. ii. 20: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." In this passage we have a full proof of all the former propositions; as, first, St. Paul was crucified and dead to sin with Christ, which plainly supposes him to have been alive to sin before; and being thus crucified and dead, "nevertheless I live," says he, a life of righteousness and holiness, but not by any power or virtue in myself. No; I could not make myself righteous or holy—"Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:" he is the author of this life, and faith is that grace by which we receive and enjoy it; "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Oh happy Paul! who could without presumption say, the Son of God loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*. Reader, wouldst thou not give all the world to be able to say the same? Thou wouldst. Why, then, pray to God for the gift of faith; and when he gives it thee, it will make thee as happy as it did Paul. It will let thee know that Christ also loves *thee*, and gave himself "for thy sins." May the spirit of grace bestow upon thee the truly living faith, that upon thine own experience thou mayest be able to repeat the words after the apostle, and say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

VI. *In the sacrament, the body and blood of Christ, from which faith receives its spiritual life, are represented by bread and wine.*—It was the great end and design of the Christian revelation to discover to us in what method the life, which we had forfeited, was to be restored. The knowledge of this is of the greatest moment. Our happy eternity depends upon it; and therefore God has been pleased to teach it us in the plainest manner. He has condescended to our capacities, and has made use of sensible objects to explain matters of faith. The soul does not see at present but through the eyes of the body. Invisible and spiritual things must be brought down to our understandings by visible and material: and this is done in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. We know that our animal life cannot be sustained without proper nourishment, neither can our spiritual life; for God has been pleased to institute and appoint the meat and drink which sustain the life of the body, to be the outward and visible signs of that spiritual meat and drink which sustain the life of the soul. He has ordained bread and wine, to represent to the outward senses the spiritual support which the soul receives from the body and blood of Christ. And in consequence of God's ordination,

VII. *It is as certain a truth, that the body and blood of Christ support the life of grace in the soul, as that bread and wine do support life in the body.*—Man, as before was observed, in his present embodied state, does not see spiritual objects but as they are compared with material. The revelation of God, in the Old Testament and the New, is adapted to man in this state. Objects of faith are represented to him by objects of sense. Outward things are ordained to stand for inward; and God, who cannot lie, has instituted the outward sign, to give us evidence of the inward grace. He has instituted bread and wine, to represent the body and blood of Christ: and as bread is the staff of the life, it is therefore a just picture of the bread of life, which Christ brought down with him from heaven; and as wine maketh glad the heart of man, it is therefore a just picture

of that most precious blood which alone taketh away the sins of the world, and therefore which alone maketh glad the hearts of sinners. The bread and wine, thus instituted, are signs to set before our senses what Christ's body and blood are to do to the soul; from whence arose the necessity of giving the same name to the sign as to the thing signified; because, what the sign does to the body, the thing signified does to the soul. When Christ took up the bread, and said, "This is my body," and the wine, and said, "This is my blood," he spake the language which the Old Testament had always used, and the only language which men could understand: for it was a received rule in the Old Testament to call the sign and the thing signified by the same name; and it will always be a received rule, so long as men are confined to sense, and cannot see spiritual objects but by their material types and instituted figures. You cannot see how the body and blood of Christ support the soul; but you see that bread and wine do support the body: and the infallible God has engaged his word and truth to you, that there is as true and real support for your souls in the body and blood of Christ, as there is for your bodies in the bread and wine. He instituted the sign, to set before your eyes a picture both of the life which Christ gave, as also of the manner in which he gave it; for his death was the purchase of your life. His body was so bruised, wounded, and smitten for your transgressions, that he says, in the Psalms, "There was no whole part in it;" therefore the sacramental bread is broken, and the wine is poured out, as his most precious blood was, out of every pore and vein. I might trace the likeness in many other instances; but these may suffice to show the propriety of instituting bread to represent the body of Christ, which is meat, not figuratively or metaphorically, but in deed and in truth; and wine to represent the blood of Christ, which is drink in deed and in truth. Thus far the meaning of the sacrament, as to the outward and visible sign, and as to the inward and spiritual grace, is plain enough: as a sign it is generally well understood, but then it is not merely a sign; it is something more:

VIII. *The bread and wine are not only signs that there is spiritual life in Christ but also as under a seal they convey it.*—This is the chief part of the sacrament; and I fear it is greatly mistaken. To set a seal to a writing or instrument, is making all that is contained in it authentic and valid. When a man sets a seal to an instrument, he declares, this is my act and deed. So setting a seal to the elements is a legal conveyance of what they signify; and whosoever receives them under God's seal, he verily and indeed receives the body and blood of Christ, together with the spiritual life purchased by them. In this sense St. Paul certainly understood the Lord's supper; for he speaks of it, 1 Cor. x. 16, not only as a sign, but also as a real seal. "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of" (or that which communicates to us) "the blood of Christ?" "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of" (or that which communicates to us) "the body of Christ?" In the cup, we communicate and partake of not the mere sign, but of the blood of Christ; in the bread, we communicate and partake of not the mere sign, but of the body of Christ: and whoever thus communicates and partakes of the body and blood of Christ, to him the outward elements are a seal of that spiritual and divine life which Christ's body broken, and his blood poured out, were the means of purchasing for a sinful world.

IX. *The bread and wine are not signs to all receivers, but signs only to the faithful.*—Our church has determined this point in her 28th article, where it is said, that "the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the supper only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean, whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten, in the supper, is faith." Faith is the means of our communicating the elements in a heavenly and spiritual manner; and this faith is the gift of God. His good Spirit alone is able to apply to the hearts of the communicants the divine support signified by the outward elements; and it is his office to make the application, and to give us an interest in all the promises of the gospel; for it is certain, none but the Holy Spirit of promise can seal to us a spiritual blessing His grace must be in the heart, convincing us of our want of spiritual life,

and of the necessity of seeking it from Jesus Christ, before we can perceive any thing more in the elements than bread and wine; and he must have given us some knowledge of our interest in Christ, before faith can live and feed upon the body and blood of Christ under the outward elements. Sacramental communion is, no doubt, to communicate and partake of the body and blood of Christ. But who are able to communicate in this manner? None but believers, who have the eye of faith open to look through the signs to the things signified. And who enables them to communicate and partake of the things signified under the signs? The Spirit of God, who dwells in the hearts of believers, and who seals to them the promises of God made to them in this sacrament. The necessity of his application and sealing them was so evident to the primitive Christians, that at the consecration of the sacramental wine the priest used to mix water with it, which was as if he had declared in so many words—I believe the influence of the Holy Spirit to be necessary to apply to our souls the merits of Christ's blood, and therefore I pour in this water, which is the known emblem of the grace of the Holy Spirit, that no person may expect spiritual and divine life from the bare receiving of the outward elements: the Holy Spirit must be in his heart, in order to make it a spiritual service, and to render it the means of conveying spiritual blessings.

X. *The state of the doctrine from what has been said.*—We are all by nature dead in trespasses and sins. We forfeited and lost that life of happiness, which innocent man enjoyed, while he walked in the presence of God, and had sweet communion with him. And we can do nothing to recover this life of God in the soul; so that if he had left us to ourselves, we must have dragged on a miserable existence until the mortal body should have fallen into the grave, and the soul should have perished for ever from God and glory. But thanks be to the ever-blessed Trinity for contriving the gracious plan of our redemption. Thanks be to God the Father for sending the Son of his love to recover the spiritual and divine life which we had forfeited and lost. Thanks be to the Holy Spirit, who enables us by the hand of faith to receive this spiritual and divine life. And thanks be to Jesus, the Prince of life, who was pleased to institute bread and wine, to be signs to the bodily senses of his body and blood, and to be seals to the soul when applied by faith. This is the state of the doctrine; from whence it follows, that unless you eat of the flesh of Christ with faith, and drink his blood with faith, receiving verily and indeed, under the signs, the things signified, then Christ himself declares, John vi. 53, "That you have no life in you"—you have none of that life which he came to give unto sinners, but you are as dead to God, and to the things of God, as a lifeless corpse is to the things of this world; for you are alienated from the life of God, and must be separated for ever, unless faith unite you to Jesus Christ, and give you life through him.

XI. *The application of the whole to three different sorts of persons: to them who have not the true living faith in Christ; to them who desire it; and to them who have it.*—Reader, this is the main point; and thou must bear with me while I ask thee in the spirit of love, Whether thou hast received this true living faith? Hast thou an interest in Christ? and dost thou know it so clearly, that thou canst trust all thy concerns in time and in eternity with him? If thy soul be not in this happy state, then consider what danger thou art in. Thou art under the guilt of all thy sins; the holy, just, and good law of heaven has found thee guilty, and thou must suffer the deserved punishment in soul and body for ever. And when an almighty God comes to inflict this punishment on thee, wretched man! think, oh! think, what will be then thy distress! Does the apprehension of it, while thou art reading this, give thee no uneasiness? That is an exceeding bad symptom; for then sin has destroyed all motions of grace, and thou art quite dead in trespasses and sins.

What! may some of you say, can I, who am alive, and in good health, be in this dead state? Yes, you certainly may; and as you have no living faith, you are indeed in it; for this spiritual deadness is very consistent with all the offices of animal life. Nay, you may be a man of gaiety and pleasure; you may be seen at all public places; you may be the delight and admiration of the polite

world; and yet you may be all the time dead to God and the things of God; the more alive you are to the world, the more dead will you be to God; as the apostle says: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," 1 Tim. v. 6. A life of sensual pleasure is a spiritual death: so that you may be alive and cheerful, and in high spirits, and yet the immortal soul within you may be all the time dead to God. You may feed and indulge your dear body with good things, and your poor soul may be starving. And when this is the case, the more flourishing your outward condition is, the less will you perceive of your spiritual deadness, because you will go on the more smoothly and merrily until God shall stop you by some sickness or affliction, or shall call you by his word, and shall send his good Spirit with it, to speak to your hearts, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee life." Oh that he may awaken thee, reader, if thou art now in the dead sleep of sin, and may give thee faith to find life to thy soul in Jesus Christ!

But, however, until God begin this work, you are not expected at the Lord's table. Until you be awakened, and see the deadness of your hearts to the things of God, you must eat and drink unworthily; for you do not desire that Christ's body and blood may support your spiritual life, as the bread and wine support animal life. Without this desire, you cannot discern the Lord's body; you cannot discern any thing more in the elements than in common bread and wine, and therefore, if you partake of them, it must be upon some wrong motive, because you want the proper dispositions; namely, an humble sense of your want of spiritual life, and an earnest desire to receive it from Jesus Christ.

In hopes that God will send some of these considerations to your hearts with the effectual working of his grace, and stir up in you this good desire, I proceed to apply what has been said to them who have already this desire. Reader, is this thy case? Hast thou been deeply convinced of thy sinful and dead state by nature? and hast thou been led to seek life from the free grace of the Lord of life? and art thou now waiting for it in his appointed ways and means? If this be thy state, thou art safe. Thou art invited; and thou wilt be a welcome guest at the Lord's table. Whoever is awakened, and finds his soul alienated from the life of God, and his hungering and thirsting for that spiritual life which was purchased for him by the body and blood of Christ, he will attend upon this holy ordinance. Come, my brother, with full trust and confidence to this spiritual and heavenly feast. Lift up thine heart to God in prayer, and desire thou mayest find his presence in his own ordinance. Be encouraged from the experience of others, who went hungering and thirsting as thou dost, and he sent them away filled with good things. Oh that their case may be thine, and soon! that thou mayest find grace to enable thee to live a life of holiness, to the glory of thy redeeming God. And to them who have received spiritual life from Christ, through faith, I make my last application.

My Christian brethren, I need not try to stir you up to a frequent attendance at the Lord's table. The many sweet and refreshing seasons which you have enjoyed there weigh more with you than a thousand arguments. Let me only remind you of the dignity of these holy mysteries. Here are the signs of Christ's body and blood, and the seals of the life which we receive from Christ's body and blood, in this world and in the next. The faithful now receive with the elements that spiritual and divine life from Christ which they are to receive from him in heaven; for here is the "bread which he brought down with him from heaven," and "the hidden manna" with which he has promised "to feed them that overcome for ever and ever:" and for these reasons faith sets a high value upon the instituted signs of spiritual life; because it receives under them the thing signified. Raise your devotion from this consideration: go with humility to receive the signs and seals of your spiritual and divine life; and may the Lord Jesus be with you at his own table! May his good Spirit prepare us all to communicate worthily, that we may spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; that we may dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; that we may be one with Christ, and Christ with us: and, being thus united, may the body and blood of Jesus Christ preserve our bodies and souls unto everlasting life! So be it, Lord Jesus. *Amen* and *Amen*

A SEASONABLE ANTIDOTE AGAINST POPERY.

IN

A DIALOGUE UPON JUSTIFICATION.

Bona opera non præcedunt justificandum sed sequuntur justificatum.

PREFACE.

THE Papists have their emissaries everywhere; and they are vastly busy at present. They have more interest in this kingdom, and their doctrines have more advocates, than people imagine. Some of their pretended enemies are their best friends, and do them the greatest service. While they cry out, popery! popery! and would make men believe that they are no Papists, they maintain the fundamental principles of the church of Rome. These were maintained openly in a little piece lately printed at Bristol, in defence of the popish doctrine of justification by works. It was given out gratis, and made some noise. Reader, thou hast here a faithful copy of this choice performance. That the author of it might have no reason to complain of his meaning being misrepresented, his words tortured, his scope and design perverted, it was thought proper to give thee his words at full length. Here they are. Read and admire!

"To the inhabitants of the parish of St. S——— in the city of Bristol, this little paper (drawn up with a view towards the prevention or removal of dangerous errors—the taking away of the groundless presumptions of some—the clearing up the necessary doubts and scruples of others—but, at the same time, towards exciting the serious attention of all, and keeping their consciences awake as to real duties) is most humbly addressed by their faithful pastor,

J——H T——R.

"*A short and familar way of explaining the important doctrine of justification, and the points dependent on it, agreeably to scripture and the church of England.*

"Justification is a law term, derived from judicial proceedings, and is opposed to condemnation. When applied to persons in this life, it anticipates the idea of a day of judgment, and declares the happy issue of a certain process supposed to be carried on in the court of conscience between God and the soul.

"This being the case, when a person is brought to the bar, and acquitted by his judge, he is then said to be justified; that is, he is declared to be just or innocent in regard to the charge laid against him. But there is this circumstance in the Christian, wherein it differs from all other justifications; viz. That the justified person is not only acquitted, but rewarded; and this reward is an eternal weight of glory.

"Therefore take notice, That the first indictment brought against you in the court of conscience is,—That you have sinned and thereby broken the law of God; and against this indictment you can make no defence, but must be infallibly cast and condemned; for all the world are become guilty; all having sinned, and come short of the glory of God. But Christ's merits are here pleadable in arrest of judgment; for when you can make no defence of your own, and would otherwise be necessarily condemned, you can plead the merits of your Saviour, and assert, that, as far as relates to the covenant of works, or the covenant of a never-failing obedience, you are freed from the curse and sentence attending the breach of it by the mediation of Christ and the imputation of his righteousness. You can assert also, that this mediation, and these merits, have obtained for you a covenant of better hopes; one more gracious in its nature; being attended with the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, and, upon all accounts,

more easy for you to perform; viz. the covenant of faith and repentance; to the performance of which a free promise of immortal happiness is annexed.

"The man is therefore brought to the bar a second time; and is then to be tried upon the terms of this new and better covenant; viz. Whether he has so co-operated with divine grace, and so improved his talent, as to have repentance and present obedience towards God, and faith and gratitude towards our Lord Jesus Christ. If he has these qualifications, his plea is allowed of, his person accepted, and he is justified: so that were he to die that moment, he would be secure in the inheritance of eternal glory. But if he is found destitute of true faith and sincere repentance, his mouth is stopped, and he has no plea to make, nor apology to offer. As to the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ, his merits, his obedience, or imputed righteousness; the consideration of them will only serve to aggravate his guilt, and increase his punishment, instead of lessening them; because these things were never intended to supersede the necessity of repentance, and a return to obedience; but, on the contrary, to make this repentance, and this return to duty, become valid and acceptable in the sight of God; and to purchase for them that reward of immortal happiness, to which the most perfect obedience (supposing such an obedience possible) could have no right or claim, without the free promises of God in Christ.

"To say more than this concerning the effects of Christ's imputed merits, is blasphemous Antinomianism, which opens a door for all manner of sin and wickedness, by taking away the necessity of personal virtue and inherent holiness, and by making the imaginary transfer of Christ's righteousness to serve as a cloak for the unrighteousness of mankind.

"To say less, is Socinianism (but one remove from modern deism), which destroys the idea of a Saviour and Redeemer, and sinks the Christian covenant of grace and mercy into a mere system of moral duties.

"Between both these extremes lies that happy gospel medium which displays the mercy of God to the returning and repenting sinner, and his justice on the unpenitent and incorrigible.

"Hence, therefore, a rational and scriptural evidence of your justification; hence a genuine and authentic proof of your being a new creature; and the proper, never-failing credential, that the spirit of God dwelleth in you: for if you have true faith and sincere repentance, you want no other signs or evidences But if you have not these, to pretend to any other assurances, tokens, feelings, or experinces, is vain and delusive.

"Hear, therefore, the judicious decision of our excellent church, as the conclusion of the whole matter;—'Oh! but how shall I know that the Holy Ghost is within me? some man perchance will say; forsooth, as the tree is known by his fruit, so is also the Holy Ghost. The fruits of the Holy Ghost (according to the mind of St. Paul) are these: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, &c. Contrariwise, the deeds of the flesh are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, debate, emulation, wrath, contention, sedition, heresy, envy, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like.—* * * Here is now that glass, wherein thou must behold thyself, and discern whether thou have the Holy Ghost within thee or the spirit of the flesh. If thou see that thy works be virtuous and good, consonant to the prescript rule of God's Word, savouring and tasting not of the flesh, but of the Spirit; then assure thyself that thou art endued with the Holy Ghost: otherwise, in thinking well of thyself, thou dost nothing else but deceive thyself.' (The first part of the Hom. on Whitsunday.)"

This is the extraordinary piece which gave occasion to the following dialogue:

Believer. How do you do, my dear sir? You are welcome to town. How did you leave all friends at Bristol?

Inquirer. Sir, I thank you, I left them all well.

Bel. Pray, do you bring us any good news from thence?

Inq. We have nothing very particular at present, except that religion is more talked of than any other topic; and we have had some stir about a little piece printed by our minister about justification.

Bel. I suppose you mean "The short and familar Way of explaining the important Doctrine of Justification," which you sent me up?

Inq. Yes, that is it; and have you read it carefully, as I desired you?

Bel. Yes, sir, at your request I have read it over several times.

Inq. And what is your opinion of it?

Bel. It is indeed short, but far from being familiar; and instead of explaining from scripture this important doctrine, he leaves scripture quite out of the question, leaves the church of England and all the protestant churches, and chooses to go to the church of Rome for his account of justification.

Inq. Although this be a very heavy charge against my doctor, yet, I dare say, you would not lay it unless you could make it good.

Bel. You know that my charge is not against the man, but against his tenets: for I never saw Dr. T. in my life.

Inq. True: but are you not too sharp and severe in supposing him to be a Papist? I know the man; and he cries out against popery as much as you can do.

Bel. Does he, indeed? Then I am sure he does not know what popery is; for he is an open defender of its fundamental doctrine.

Inq. How do you prove that?

Bel. Why, from this very paper of his. He here maintains justification by works, which is the grand heresy of the Papists, and from which their most dangerous errors are derived; and he denies that justification is by faith only, which all sound Protestants maintain; and therefore he cannot be a Protestant.

All Protestants hold justification to be by faith only; but Dr. T. holds justification to be by works: therefore he is not a Protestant.

And he must be a Papist, because the grand heresy of popery consists in holding justification to be by works, and Dr. T. holds justification to be by works; therefore he is in the grand heresy of popery.

Inq. But from whence does it appear that Dr. T. holds justification by works?

Bel. It appears from the general scope and design of this little tract, in which he sets out at first tolerably well, and until he comes near the end of his third paragraph there is something like the truth; but he begins to lose sight of it when he talks "of Christ's having obtained for us a covenant of better hopes, and that faith and repentance are the terms of this covenant."

Inq. And are they not?

Bel. No. The scripture considers faith and repentance as the privileges and free gifts of the covenant of grace, which the Doctor mistakes for terms and conditions. And this mistake runs throughout. He all along supposes the graces of the covenant to be the terms, and its free gifts and privileges the conditions of it; which is downright popery.

Inq. Do you take the gospel, then, to be a revelation of grace and mercy, and not a proposal of a covenant of terms and conditions?

Bel. I take the gospel to be glad tidings of salvation for poor sinners, informing them what Christ hath done for their salvation, and how by the obedience of his life, and by the sacrifice of his death, he made a full atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness; and showing how the free grace of God applies to them the benefits of Christ's atonement and righteousness; namely, by the Holy Spirit's working in them repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. By the gift of repentance they are turned unto God; and under a sense of their fallen, sinful, and miserable state, as transgressors of his holy and righteous law, each of them is constrained to cry out, "God be merciful unto me, a sinner!" And to alleviate their distress, and to bring peace and comfort to their souls, they are enabled by faith, which is also the gift of the Holy Spirit, to trust in and to plead the righteousness of Christ only, who is of God made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And hereby the believer is entitled to immortal happiness, on account of what Christ hath done for him, the comfort of which he enjoys by what the Holy Spirit hath wrought in him; viz. a believing apprehension and conviction that he has an interest in the righteousness of the God-man. This is, I think, the true gospel of Jesus Christ, which is evidently no covenant of faith

and repentance, but a revelation of grace and mercy, and in which we have the free promises of eternal life, but not annexed to the performance of faith and repentance as works of man, or the terms or conditions of the covenant, but to Jesus Christ and to the perfect obedience and full satisfaction he hath made for sin; for the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Inq. I see how widely different your view of the gospel is from the Doctor's. He absolutely insists upon there being some terms or conditions of justification; whereas, if I understand you right, there are none.

Bel. The gospel has mentioned none. "Do this and thou shalt live," is the language of the law. Here life is promised upon the terms of obedience: whereas, in the gospel, life is purchased for us by Christ, and also all the gospel promises are freely made through him, and all the gospel graces are fully given through him, not to be received upon the performance of any previous terms or works, but freely given by the mere grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And the Doctor strangely errs, not knowing the scriptures, when he talks of faith and repentance as terms; for I suppose he means, by terms, the conditions upon the performance of which we are justified: but that which is promised as a free gift cannot be received upon the performance of any terms or conditions; and justification itself, as well as faith and repentance, are promised in scripture as free gifts, consequently they are not to be received upon the performance of any terms or conditions.

You may read, Rom. v. 16, 18, that justification is the free gift of God. So is faith, Eph. ii. 8. It is the gift of God, wrought in the heart by his operation, and one of the fruits of his good Spirit. So likewise is repentance, Acts v. 31. God hath exalted Jesus with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance. Now, since faith and repentance are the free gifts of God, how can they be the terms or conditions of our justification? How can they be conditions to qualify us to receive what God gives freely, and according to the pleasure of his own will? Can you reconcile this difficulty? How can God give that freely which he does not give but upon certain terms or conditions?

Inq. But is it not a very common expression among divines, "the terms of acceptance?" I think I have seen a celebrated book with that title.

Bel. You will find neither the expression nor the doctrine in scripture; but, in direct opposition to both, the scripture says, "We are accepted in the Beloved;" and again, "we are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Here we are said to be accepted in Christ without any terms or conditions of our own fulfilling. And is it not a palpable contradiction to say that we are justified freely by grace, and yet at the same time upon certain terms or conditions?

Inq. But are there no terms of acceptance?

Bel. You hear what the scripture says; "We are accepted in the Beloved."

Inq. What! without any terms?

Bel. Yes, without any terms to be previously performed by us to qualify us for acceptance.

Inq. But how, then, am I to understand the Doctor; for he says, "the man is therefore brought to the bar a second time, and is then to be tried upon the terms of this new and better covenant; viz. Whether he has so co-operated with divine grace, and so improved his talent, as to have repentance and present obedience towards God, and faith and gratitude towards our Lord Jesus Christ. If he has these qualifications, his plea is allowed of, his person accepted, and he is justified." What am I to think of these words?

Bel. You are to think that they contain the grand heresy of the Papists; and they state it as clearly as any doctor of the Sorbonne could have done; for

First, Here we have a man brought to the bar.

Second, His trial is put upon this issue—Has he so co-operated with divine grace, and so improved his talent, as to have repentance and faith, present obedience and gratitude?

Third, If he has these qualifications, and good works, then he is justified: but,

Fourth, As the Doctor adds, "if he is found destitute of true faith and sincere

repentance, his mouth is stopped, and he has no plea to make, nor apology to offer: " from whence it follows,

Fifth, that no man is justified without these qualifications and good works: they must go before his justification. All this is downright popery. It is contrary to the whole tenor of scripture, contrary to the doctrines of the church of England, and contrary to the Doctor's own oaths and subscriptions.

Inq. Not so fast, my dear friend. You charge too high. I see, indeed, that the Doctor does require these qualifications before hand, as previously necessary to justification: but how do you prove this to be unscriptural?

Bel. I might prove it from the general scope and design of the sacred volume, which is to direct sinners to the righteousness of the God-man Christ Jesus for justification; but I refer you to the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, which were written to establish this truth—that "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ," Gal. ii. 16, which excludes all qualifications and works. Rom. iii. 24. God declares, "we are justified freely by his grace: and if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace."

Again we read, Rom. iv. 5, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Observe how widely St. Paul differs from Dr. T.

Dr. T. says, A man is not justified without certain works and qualifications:

St. Paul says, "He is justified that worketh not."

Dr. T. teaches that a man is not justified unless he first have faith and obedience.

St. Paul asserts that God justifieth the ungodly. What faith and obedience has an ungodly person?

St. Paul sends sinners to Christ for righteousness, that they may be made the righteousness of God in him; but,

Dr. T. sends them to their own qualifications and works, without which they cannot be made the righteousness of God in Christ.

Moreover, St. Paul says, Rom. iv. 6 "God imputeth righteousness without works."

Dr. T. denies it, and maintains that God imputeth not righteousness unless there be works and qualifications going before. Now what do you think of these scriptures? Do they not entirely overthrow Dr. T.'s notion of justification?

Inq. Indeed, they appear to me in a stronger light than ever I saw them in before: but what do you think of the person who is tried and cast for want of qualifications?

Bel. I suppose you refer to this passage: "But if he is found destitute of true faith and sincere repentance, his mouth is stopped, and he has no plea to make, nor apology to offer." How widely different is this from this scripture state of the case, which represents the persons who are to be justified freely as "ungodly, as working not, as found to be sinners while they are seeking to be justified:" whereas Dr. T. makes them saints, before they are justified. They have repentance, obedience, faith, and gratitude; and upon pleading these qualifications they are pronounced to be righteous in themselves, and are justified. How opposite is this to the scripture doctrine, which teaches us that we unrighteous sinners are made the righteousness of God in Christ! but how exactly agreeable is it to the sentiments of the Papists!

Inq. You are still harping upon that string. I tell you again that Dr. T. is a bitter enemy to popery, and a sound friend to the church of England.

Bel. He may call himself so; but he and the church of England are as wide as the east is from the west. Her doctrine is founded upon an old maxim; namely, That good works do not go before in the person who is to be justified, but follow the person being justified. *Bona opera non præcedunt justificandum, sed sequuntur justificatum.* Dr. T. makes them go before, and thereby forgets what he once set his hand to; viz. the 13th Article, the title of which is this: "Of Works before Justification." "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive

grace, or, as the school authors say, deserve grace of congruity; yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

Compare Dr. T.'s paper with this article, and you will see that they are diametrically opposite. The article says, "Works done before justification have in them the nature of sin." The Doctor once set his hand to this doctrine; but now he writes against it, and says that they have in them the nature of merit; for they are qualifications indispensably necessary to justification. Let a whole college of Jesuits reconcile these contradictions if they can.

Inq. Truly, I cannot see how they can be reconciled. But have good works no place in our justification?

Bel. No; none at all; for works done before justification, all Dr. T.'s qualifications, have in them the nature of sin, according to our church.

Inq. How am I to understand this doctrine?

Bel. Hear what our church says of it in the second part of the Homily on Salvation: "The true understanding of this doctrine—we be justified freely by faith without works—is not that this our own act to believe in Christ, or this our faith in Christ, which is within us, doth justify us, and deserve our justification unto us (for that were to count ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue that is within ourselves); but the true understanding and meaning thereof is, that although we hear God's word and believe it; although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread and fear of God within us; and do never so many works thereunto; yet we must renounce the merit of all our said virtues, of faith, hope, charity, and all other virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that be far too weak, and insufficient and imperfect, to deserve remission of our sins and our justification." Is not the meaning of these words very plain and clear? And what can the Doctor object to them? If he denies their authority, what becomes of his oaths and subscriptions? If he allows of it how can he insist upon faith, repentance, &c. as qualifications requisite to our justification, after the church has absolutely excluded faith and repentance by name, and all other virtues and good deeds, from deserving any part of our justification? How does this reasoning appear to you?

Inq. Why, really, it is decisive. I did not think you could have brought such convincing proofs, but I am now satisfied that our justification is not from any works which we have done, can do, or shall do; yet there is a difficulty still sticks with me.

Bel. Pray what is it?

Inq. It is this: Does not your doctrine of justification supersede the necessity of repentance and return to obedience, as the Doctor expresses himself?

Bel. Do not call it my doctrine. It is the doctrine of scripture, and of the church of England; for you know we are taught that Christ was exalted to be a prince and a Saviour for to give faith and repentance, even that faith which worketh by love: and how then can this doctrine supersede the necessity of faith, repentance, and return to duty, since Christ always gives these graces to those persons whom he justifies?

Inq. But certainly this doctrine does supersede the necessity of repentance and return to duty.

Bel. No; far from it. It only supersedes them as qualifications for our being justified; for the scripture and our church allow of no qualifications or conditions. And the Doctor, without intending it, has fallen into their opinion; for, in direct contradiction to what he had been maintaining, he says, "That the imputed righteousness of Christ was to make repentance and this return to duty become valid and acceptable in the sight of God:" from whence I argue, upon his principles, that without this imputed righteousness they would not be valid nor acceptable; and if not valid nor acceptable, how could they be necessary qualifications for our justification? How could that make us accepted which was itself not acceptable? So that here we have J———h against T———r boldly contradicting him to his face.

Inq Surely you must misrepresent the Doctor.

Bel. No, my good friend, I do not. Look at the paper. See, here are the very words. Read them over.

Inq. Well, I protest, I could not have thought Dr. T. would have contradicted himself in such a palpable manner. I am sorry for him.

Bel. Sorry! Ay, so you ought. If you are sorry for his false reasoning, how sincerely sorry should you be for his false doctrine? For the scripture teaches that our persons are justified, and the church asserts that we are accounted righteous, through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But Dr. T. assigns the obedience, sacrifice, satisfaction, and imputed righteousness of Christ, no other place than to make our works valid and acceptable, and to purchase for THEM (what? for righteousness and return to duty? Yes, for I find no other case to agree) the reward of immortal happiness. I could never find in scripture that all that Christ did and suffered was to make our repentance and return to duty valid and acceptable in the sight of God, or that he came into the world to purchase the reward of immortal happiness for repentance and return to duty; but I read often of his giving himself for sinners, of his dying to atone for sin, and of his purchasing eternal life for them that were dead in trespasses and sins. Can you reconcile this with the Doctor's notion of Christ's righteousness making our obedience and return to duty valid and acceptable?

Inq. No, indeed, I cannot, and am sorry the Doctor should maintain things so absurd and unscriptural.

Bel. I am glad you are already sorry for him: you will have more reason when I come to his next paragraph. There he affirms, "that to say more than this concerning the effects of Christ's imputed merits, to say more than that our good works qualify us to receive Christ's imputed merits, is," he says, "blasphemous Antinomianism." But the scripture and our church say more: therefore the Doctor calls the scripture and our church blasphemous Antinomians; and he says their doctrine "opens a door for all manner of sin and wickedness, by taking away the necessity of personal virtue and inherent holiness." The scripture abhors the Doctor's charge. What! shall we make Christ the minister of sin? God forbid! Our church enters her protest in the third part of the Homily on Salvation, in these words: "How can a man have the true faith, sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins be forgiven, and be reconciled to the favour of God, and to be partaker of the kingdom of heaven by Christ, when he liveth ungodly, and denieth Christ in his deeds?" And as to these unscriptural terms—personal virtue and inherent holiness—they are brought in to be a kind of contrast to the righteousness of Christ, and to throw contempt upon it. You know my opinion of Christ's righteousness; and you can imagine how sensibly I must have been affected at the reading of the next words. I declare, my blood ran cold, and I even now shudder, at the repeating them! Lord, grant they may never be laid to the Doctor's charge!—"And by making the imaginary transfer of Christ's righteousness to serve as a cloak for the unrighteousness of mankind."

Inq. My dear sir, what offends you herein so mightily? What necessity for this great outcry?

Bel. Do not you see the reason? Is not that righteousness here trampled under foot as a mean and vile thing, in which the Lord's people here below, and above, appear before him without spot of sin unto salvation? For

First, It is here asserted that, to say a man is justified by Christ's righteousness without works, is destroying personal virtue and inherent holiness:

Secondly, That the transfer of his righteousness serves as a cloak for the unrighteousness of mankind: and

Thirdly, That the imputed righteousness of Christ, which the doctor treated before as a real thing, he now treats as an imaginary thing.

Inq. Does he indeed? What! does he call Christ's imputed righteousness imaginary?

Bel. Yes; he does not mince the matter, but treats it as a fable! the righteousness of God he treats as a mere imagination! He once indeed thought it a real thing, and set his hand to the truth of it; and he still acts in the ministry

in consequence of his subscription to the thirty-nine articles, although he now writes against the 11th, "Upon the Justification of Man," which says, "We are accounted righteous before God ONLY, for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings." What do you think of this article? Does it not say more than the Doctor does? And is it, then, blasphemous Antinomianism? Is it opening a door to all manner of sin and wickedness, to say that we are accounted righteous ONLY through Christ's imputed righteousness? Answer me, my friend.

Inq. Indeed, this article has struck me. That word ONLY is an answer to all the Doctor's paper. I now see clearly he is in the wrong; and I thank you heartily for convincing me of it. I understand how free and full the righteousness of Christ is, and that it is imputed to the ungodly, who have no qualifications, no good works, no personal virtue, no inherent holiness. And I pray God, I may be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ—the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Bel. I have reason to be thankful if my discourse has been of any use to you. I have spoken freely, and more so, as I know not the Doctor, and cannot be supposed to have any dislike to him. If ever you should bring him into my company, I would speak more freely to him than I have of him, both for the sake of his own soul and of their souls who are committed to his care. I doubt not but I could convince him that his general inference, which begins thus, "hence, therefore, a rational and scriptural evidence of your justification is neither rational nor scriptural. If you have true faith and sincere repentance, you want no other signs or evidences," says he, "of your justification." Observe this faith and this repentance are to go before as qualifications of our being justified; and considered in this respect, our church says, they have in them the nature of sin; and therefore they are no signs or evidences at all. "But if you have not these," as the Doctor adds, "to pretend to any other assurances, tokens, feelings, or experiences, is vain and delusive." Does he know any one who maintains that a man may be in a state of justification, and yet have no faith or repentance? I do not hear of any person who maintains this; but I know some who talk of certain marks and evidences attending true faith, which the scripture has promised; and these must not be discarded as vain or delusive; for the scripture has promised us the assurance of faith as the gift of God, and to be wrought in us by the operation of God, and mentions the earnest or token of the Spirit, and speaks of feeling after the Lord and finding him, yea, feeling in ourselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, as our church expresses it in article 17, and in another place, feeling our consciences at peace with God through remission of our sin (third part of the Homily for Rogation Week), and feeling this with so much certainty, that we can tell our experience with David: "Come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." So that we must not reject all tokens, feelings, and experiences, as vain and delusive.

Inq. Doubtless, there is such a thing as the assurance of faith; and I pray God I may attain it.

Bel. God grant you may. And now let me ask you—Does it not appear to you, upon the whole, that the Doctor was greatly mistaken even in the very title of his paper? For he has been establishing groundless presumptions instead of taking them away; giving further handle to unscriptural doubts and fears instead of clearing them up; and lulling consciences asleep upon the sandy foundation of human righteousness instead of building upon Christ, the rock of ages, for righteousness to justification, and for true holiness of heart and life. His notions are opposite to scripture, and inconsistent with the determinations of the church of England; and therefore they come under one of the marks of the fruits of the flesh enumerated by St. Paul, and quoted by the Doctor from the Homily—namely, HERESY. Are these things so?

Inq. Indeed they appear to me with such full conviction, that I need not trouble you about the last part of his paper; for I now see plainly enough, that this quotation from the Homily is nothing to the purpose; because it only says, that when the Spirit of Christ is within a man, he will bring forth the fruits of

the Spirit; but the Homily does not maintain, with the Doctor, that these fruits will justify us.

Bel. No; far from it. The doctrine of the Homilies is this:

The righteousness for which a sinner is accounted righteous before God is the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

It was not the end of Christ's fulfilling all righteousness, to make repentance and return to duty valid and acceptable, nor yet to purchase for repentance and return to duty the reward of eternal happiness; but he fulfilled all righteousness, that our persons might first be made righteous; after which our works would be acceptable. And

Accordingly we never read of his righteousness being imputed to them who have repented and returned to duty; but it is said to be imputed to the ungodly, to him that worketh not, without any qualifications or conditions.

Faith is the hand which apprehends, or the instrument which applies, Christ's imputed righteousness, and thereby justifies.

This justifying faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

He gives us evidence of our being justified, by bearing his testimony with our spirits, that we are the children of God, and

By enabling us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

These fruits do not justify us, but prove us to be justified; as the fruits upon a tree do not make it alive, but prove it to be alive.

Inq. I heartily assent to these truths; and I desire to experience the comfort of them in my own soul.

Bel. I am glad to leave you in this sweet frame of mind. I wish all our Bristol friends were in your way of thinking.

Inq. I promise you it will not be my fault if they be not. I will do my endeavour to convince them.

Bel. I hope God will prosper your endeavours, and give his blessing to your magistrates and people. May they love Christ and his righteousness! may your clergy and Dr. T. among the rest, preach Christ, and teach men to submit to his righteousness! and may Christ pour his choicest blessings upon the city of Bristol, that it may be celebrated through the earth for the city of righteousness, the faithful city!

AN

ESSAY ON PSALMODY.

Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people: sing unto him, sing Psalms unto him.—1 Chron. xvi. 8, 9.

PREFACE.

In the service of the church of England there is great use made of the Psalms They are read in every day's service, both at morning and evening prayer, and are constantly sung in public worship. It is much to be wished they were better understood, that the daily reading and singing of them might be the means of grace. Very few, it is to be feared, receive the profit from them, which, as an ordinance of God, they were intended to administer. I have long seen the design of them greatly mistaken, and have long lamented the contempt put upon them. At last I have been persuaded to try to make the subject of these divine hymns plain and clear, and to restore the singing of them in the congregation to their primitive usefulness. This is my present attempt. Success in it depends on help from God. He revealed the book of Psalms, and he alone can make the singing of them profitable. I hope he will. May he accompany my well-meant performance with his presence, and prosper it with his grace. If it bring any honour to his holy name and word, thanks be to him. If any body reads it, and is stirred up to sing more and better: if our public singing of Psalms be reformed, and become in the least like the great concert of saints and angels, this will be altogether his doing; may he have all his praise. I deserve none, being only in his church and service what he is pleased to make me. Through his grace I wish to live to his glory, and to be useful in my day to his cause and interest. Help me, reader, to exalt him in life and death. May it be thy happiness to do the same: for which thou hast the hearty prayer of thy servant in him,

W. Romaine.

Men and Brethren,—We are the creatures of God, dependent on him for being and for well-being. He gives us all our faculties, both of mind and body, and he requires us to use them in his service, and to his glory. This is our bounden duty. It is the peculiar dignity of man, who never acts more nobly than when he employs the powers bestowed upon him to the praise of the giver. None of them should be useless, but each should be exerted, whenever an opportunity offers of glorifying God.

In the common actions of life, this may and should be done: the rule is, "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;" but it is far more needful in spiritual matters, which have an immediate relation to God and his worship. These he has appointed to be the means of showing forth his praise. Among them singing of Psalms is not the least. It is frequently commanded, and with a promise—faithful is he who hath promised—he will render the means effectual to answer the end. When believers employ the faculties of soul and body in singing of his goodness and greatness, he does accept the

service, and testifies his acceptance. He does indeed communicate to them, by his Spirit, joy and peace, and he renders singing to the Lord, with melody in the heart, the means of increasing the melody and joy.

But where is such singing? In what church? Among what people? There are some. May their number increase. It is worth while to try to increase them, especially as this ordinance is so much neglected. The holy affections, which should be stirred up by so heavenly an exercise, are generally damped by it. When it is performed with coldness and indifference, how can it produce sensations suitable to such exalted means of grace? Or when contempt is put upon it, how can it convey any of the promised blessings?

Many things have contributed to the present neglect and abuse of this ordinance, and I have been led to the following reflection, in order to try to bring it again into repute. Happy, indeed, shall I think myself, if the Lord should be pleased to make use of them, as any way conducive to the singing of his praises with the understanding; I shall pray and labour for it: may he give his abundant blessing.

One of the first and great causes of neglecting the singing of Psalms seems to have arisen from not attending to

CHAPTER I.

The Subject of the Book of Psalms.

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy: for to him give all the prophets witness. With one voice they speak of his wonderful person, of his divine undertakings, and of his complete and eternal salvation. It is the spirit of their writings to reveal and to teach the good knowledge of the Lord. Whoever understands them perfectly, will find the prophets treating of the coming of Immanuel in the flesh, as clearly as the evangelists. When this most blessed event was to be accomplished in the fulness of time, a New Testament witness, filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath according to his promise visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." The Lord never left himself without witness. Ever since the world began, he had prophets, who foretold what Christ was to be and to do, who testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

This is the subject of the book of Psalms. It treats of Christ, and contains the praises of the Father's love, and of the Spirit's grace, as they were manifested in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The salvation of sinners through him is the greatest display of the covenant mercies of the eternal Three: therefore the Psalms celebrate his wonderful person, and his divine undertakings—they describe his obedience and sufferings—his conflicts with, and victories over, all his enemies—his resurrection and ascension—his sitting upon the throne, the great king of all worlds, visible and invisible—his gathering together, and perfecting the number of his elect—his coming at the last day to judge men and angels—and the glory which he will bestow upon his redeemed, when they shall be with him, and like him, kings and priests unto God and his Father, and shall reign with him for ever.

What subject can be more noble in itself than this: here are the greatest transactions of the greatest personages that possibly can be—the ever blessed Trinity purposing and covenanting to bring many sons unto glory—displaying their wisdom, and love, and power, in an infinite degree, through the incarnation, obedience, and sufferings of the God-man, Jehovah Jesus, and through the effectual grace of the Holy Spirit, calling and bringing the elect to experience the Father's love to them by faith in the Son's perfect salvation, and then guiding them safe by his council and might unto the glory provided for them. This wonderful theme is treated of in the book of Psalms in a manner suitable to its dignity—it is not only spoken of, but also celebrated—not merely described, but

also praised. The language therefore is exalted. The sentiments are sublime. The poetry is divine. And no wonder: the author is equal to the subject. He is capable of extolling the mercies of that covenant, which reaches from eternity to eternity; and of extolling them according to their true greatness. The Psalms are the composition of the all-wise Spirit: for the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David, and of the other inspired penmen. He guided both their hearts and their hands. The sentiments and the words are his: for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—they spake as he moved them—they indited the Psalms under his inspiration. The praises therein given of the person and work of the ever blessed Immanuel are not human, but truly divine. What may not be expected from such an author? Who is by essential union one in the Godhead with the Father and the Son, and who is by his office to testify of Jesus, and to glorify Jesus. If the Psalms be read under his influence, they will be found equal to the subject, in every view suited to exalt the incarnate God, and if they be sung with grace in the heart, they will increase the faith and hope of every devout worshipper. There are several Psalms which are applicable to none but Jesus Christ, and many expressions which could not be truly spoken by any one but by him who was God and man in one Christ. Many will receive new lustre and emphasis, when viewed in the same light. The proper Psalms, which are appointed to be read on the festivals, do certainly treat of the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Christ, and of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in consequence of Christ's ascension: for, says he, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him unto you." Our reformers certainly understood those proper Psalms to be descriptive of Christ, and took them in the same sense our Lord and his apostles did; who have quoted the book of Psalms eighty-two times. Their manner of quoting it demonstrates, that they took it for granted it was written concerning Christ. Indeed many passages cannot be applied to any one, but to him: for instance—he appeals to God to be tried according to his innocence—to be rewarded according to his righteousness—he desires to be judged according to the cleanness of his heart and hands—could any one of us say, "Search me to the bottom, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me." All have sinned. All we like sheep have gone astray, and if we were to be tried according to the holy law by a heart-searching God, every mouth would be stopped, and all the world would become guilty before him. Oh what would become of the best of us, if God was to judge us as we are. The cxixth Psalm is a description of the love of Christ to the law, his study in it and his perfect observance of it. Oh what love have I unto thy law—with my whole heart have I sought thee—I have not departed from my judgments—"I have sworn" (with the oath, of the covenant) "and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." Are not these the peculiar descriptions of the work of the God-man, in which he was alone, and of the people there was none with him—any more than there was in the offering for sin, when he trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him, of which the xlth Psalm treats—any more than there was in bringing in everlasting righteousness, for which the church praises him in several Psalms, particularly in lxxi, and will triumph in his righteousness, and in his only, for evermore. The glory is his. No offering, no righteousness, but his can save: the praises therefore of the great salvation of our God, which run through the book of Psalms, are the peculiar prerogatives of the King of saints. They are his crown and diadem. The honours are solely his, and he will wear them with unrivalled fame. His name is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the armies of heaven follow him with one mind and one heart, ascribing unto him honour and glory, and blessing and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

But although the work was altogether his from first to last, none being capable of any part, but he who is God as well as man; yet, eternal blessings on him! he did it for us and for our salvation. His people have an interest in what he is—God in our nature—they have their share in what he did and suffered for them, and they have an unspeakable benefit in what he is now doing for them in the

presence of the Father. By believing, they have pardon and peace through his offering on the tree. By believing, they put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and find acceptance in his righteousness. By believing, they commit their persons and concerns into his hands, and he ever liveth their prevailing intercessor to obtain for them every needful blessing. Thus they learn to trust him, and in trusting, to experience his faithfulness. He gives them cause to love him, and to rejoice in him. For having received a new birth and life in him, they can sing the Psalms of his nativity, and join angels and men in ascribing glory in the highest to the incarnate God. They read of his dying love in several Psalms, and they worship him for bearing their sins, and shame, and curse, in his body and soul upon the cross: the lamb that was slain, and redeemed them to God by his blood, is the constant theme of their grateful songs. When they read or sing the Psalms of his resurrection they look upon him as the first fruits of the dead, the earnest of the whole harvest, and with grateful hearts they bless him for making, and for keeping them alive to God. They share in all his victories and triumphs, being his happy subjects: for he has a kingdom, which is celebrated in many of the Psalms. These treat of his almighty power to rule all beings and things: and of the sweet sceptre of his love, by which he governs his willing people. He manifests to them the greatness and majesty of his kingdom, so that under his royal protection they find deliverance from the temptations to sin, and from the miseries of sin, and through his special love he gives them here in the kingdom of his grace a happiness, which all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, cannot possibly give. They live happy indeed: for he makes them sing of the good of his chosen: they do rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and they glory in his inheritance. These are high privileges; but they are only the earnests of that kingdom which endureth for ever. Oh what glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God, in which the great king delighteth to dwell, and to manifest his glory. Wonderful things are written of his everlasting kingdom in the book of Psalms with which his happy subjects mix faith, and can then sing them with a hope full of glory and immortality The Psalms throughout so describe the King of saints that they who partake of bis grace may find in them continual exercise of their faith, and continual improvement of it: for they have an interest in all he was, and in all he is. Was his trust in God unshaken? They hope he will make theirs steadfast. Was his walk holy, harmless, and undefiled? They depend on him for strength to tread in his steps. Were his tempers perfectly holy? They admire his example, and through his Spirit they daily put off the old man, and put on the new. Was he carried through the greatest sufferings with entire resignation? They look up under all their trials for his promised support. Has he all his enemies under his feet? They are waiting in joyful hope for the fruit of his conquest. Is he now in our nature in the highest glory? It is promised them, their eyes shall see the king in his beauty. Oh blessed prospect! They shall soon be with him, and like him too, when they shall see him as he is. The Psalms are so written of Christ, that every believer may find comfort in what he reads or sings. Christ being the head of the body the church, all the members do share with their head in what he is and has, in his incarnation, life and death, resurrection and intercession, yea, they shall live and reign with him for ever and ever. That my meaning may be better understood, I will give an instance in the first Psalm. Let us consider, how it is to be understood of Christ, and in what manner it is useful to those, who, through faith, are with Christ.

As it treats of Christ, it is a proper preface to the whole book. It gives an account of the subject, and is an abridgment of it, containing in substance what is largely handled in the other parts. For Christ is here described under the character of that perfect person, who was to retrieve for his people all the losses of the fall. He was in their nature, and yet he was by nature and practice, in heart and life, separate from sinners; negatively he had not the least communion with them, being without one spot of sin, positively he was perfectly holy. He fulfilled all the righteousness of the law in its highest requirements, both in obedience to its precepts and also in suffering its penalties. Thus he became to his people the tree of life, having life in himself, as

God self-existent, and having life communicatively, as God-man, to bestow upon every branch in him.—" I am the vine," says he, " ye are the branches :" by him they are quickened, in him they live, through him they become fruitful, and by his influence they prosper and bring forth much fruit to the glory of God. Herein they are directly contrary to the wicked, who are never quickened by him, but left to perish in their sins.

PSALM I.

1. Successful are the steps of that person, who never walks in the counsel of transgressors, and in the way of sinners never stands, and in the seat of mockers never sits.

2. But in the law of Jehovah is his delight, and in his law will he meditate day and night.

3. For then he shall be like a tree that was planted by the streams of waters, which will yield its fruits in their season, and its top-shoot shall never fade, but whatsoever he shall take in hand he shall be able to make it prosperous.

4. It shall not be so with transgressors, but they shall be like the chaff which the wind blows away.

5. Because the transgressors shall not be set up in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6. For Jehovah acknowledgeth the way of the righteous, but the way of sinners shall be destroyed.

This Psalm is a general description of the success of Jesus in his work, showing what steps he was to take for the salvation of his people : he was to be a man like us in all things, excepting sin ; from which he was perfectly free : no thought of it ever entered his mind, not one moment did he decline from the way of duty, but always acted under the influence of divine love, in his life, and by his example, reproving those who made a mock at sin. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled in his nature, and separate from sinners in his practice : for

He was perfectly acquainted with the divine law : it was his continual study, and to obey it was his continual delight. It was his meat and drink—" Lo, I come," says he, " to do thy will, O God." He rejoiced to fulfil its precepts by his life, and he was a willing sacrifice to suffer its penalties in his death. In both he magnified the law, and made it infinitely honourable. And,

Thus it became him to bring many sons unto glory. Whatsoever he undertook for them had perfect success. He was the tree of life watered with abundant streams of grace, the Spirit being given not by measure unto him ; a tree subject to no change, but always growing and flourishing, always bearing forth fruit, and making every branch in it a partaker of the heavenly influences of the stock upon which it grows.

But the transgressors, who are not grafted into him by faith, have no spiritual life or fruit—they are lighter than vanity itself : and they shall be driven from the judgment seat of God, as easily as any light chaff is driven about by a strong wind, and they shall be justly banished for evermore from the general assembly and church of the first born.

For Jehovah always approved of the way of the righteous, whom he chose and called, and justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus ; but the way of transgressors he disapproves, and they shall soon utterly perish.

In this sense the Psalm is true of Christ, but believers have their share in the blessings of which it treats ; for in his success they partake. They have fellowship with him in every step which he took to work out their salvation. When they have redemption through faith in his blood, and free acceptance through faith in his righteousness, then they walk humbly with him, and he puts his fear within them. He teaches them to depart from evil, they do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful.

But he puts his law in their inward parts, and writes it in their hearts : in their renewed mind they are brought to delight in it ; they make it their continual

study, and through grace to walk in it as their continual practice. Yea, they live by the faith of the Son of God, as branches in the tree of life: because he lives they shall live also; drawing from their life-giving root every thing needful to mortify sin in them, and to enable them to bring forth fruit unto God.

Thus he separates them from transgressors, who live and die in their sins: these are like chaff, which the wind driveth away.

Because they shall not stand in the judgment of God, nor come into the church of Christ.

For the Lord with his loving-kindness regarded the way of the righteous, but the way of transgressors shall perish.

Thus believers look upon the Psalms. They consider them as treating of the glorious person and work of the God-man, and considering themselves in him, as members under him their Head, quickened by his Spirit, and receiving all the blessings of spiritual life out of his fulness, they can understand and sing the praises of Immanuel, with melody in their hearts; for they can apply to themselves the benefits of his atonement and righteousness, of his intercession and glory, and this renders the Psalms precious, and singing them an high ordinance. Their God does meet them and bless them in singing Psalms. While they express their love to him he communicates his love to them, and they have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ by the Spirit.

But this will be more evident from considering some particulars relating to the subject; such as

CHAPTER II.

The Scripture Names of the Psalms.

There are three Hebrew names often used in the titles of the Psalms, which the Septuagint have translated Psalms, Hymns, and Songs. The word rendered by them hymns is Thehilim, which is the running title to this book, expressive of the general design, and is an abridgement of the whole matter. It comes from a Hebrew word, that signifies the brisk motion of light, shining and putting its splendour upon any object, and this makes it bright and illustrious. Hence comes the propriety of the word, as it is used to praise, which is to set an object in the light; that the rays shining upon it may render it splendid and beautiful, and thereby glorious and praiseworthy. Such are the Psalms. They are rays of light—enlighteners, (if I might use such a word, and it is the literal sense of the Hebrew hymns) intended to manifest the glory of the person, and to show forth the praises of the work of God-Jesus: for light, in its various uses in nature, is the appointed emblem of the Lord Christ. He is distinguished by this name throughout the Old Testament; and he applied all the passages to himself in the New, when he declared—"I am the light of the world"—"I am not only the Creator of light in the material world, but also in the spiritual world—darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, until I, the light of life, arise upon their souls: and when I come with healing in my rays, in that day shall the deaf hear my words, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."

Jesus gives eyes to see with, and light to see by: he opens the eyes of the understanding, and makes spiritual objects visible: so that, whoever is enlightened with saving knowledge, has it all from him, and it should all lead to him. He is the bright day-star which shines throughout the volume of revelation; but in no part with clearer rays than in the book of Psalms. Here he is exalted in his meridian glory: for the whole scripture does not give greater light into what he was to be, and to do, and to suffer, his life, his temper, his employment from his tender age until his crucifixion, than is to be found in those divine hymns: nor are there any more full descriptions of his passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and his kingdom which ruleth over all. In the Psalms, he himself read and meditated day and night, while he was growing in wisdom and stature. And in them will every true believer meditate, that he may have more of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the person of Jesus Christ.

As the eyes of his understanding are more enlightened with this saving truth, he will more happily enjoy in his heart the benefits of the humiliation and exaltation of the incarnate Jehovah. May this, reader, be thy happy case: may every Psalm be as the shining light, leading thee to a growing knowledge of Jesus, and shining on clearer still until the perfect day.

Zemer is another Hebrew word which the Septuagint translates Psalms: as a verb, it signifies to cut and prune trees; as a noun, it is a branch cut off, and pruned, and by way of eminence, the Branch, the man whose name is the Branch, who was known and distinguished by this title in the scripture. He was the eternal God, and he was in the fulness of time to be made flesh, and to cut off, but not for himself. This was the great transaction in the everlasting covenant—"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, (Zech. iii. 7, 8.) Behold I will bring forth my servant, the Branch," the promised branch which was to spring from the root of Jesse; and again, Zech. vi. 12, 13. "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, Behold the man whose name is the Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, (in which the Godhead shall reside) even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and shall rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both," between Jehovah and the Branch; for the Branch having grown up in his place was in the temple of his body to ratify the counsel of peace; he was to establish it in his life, and to fulfil it in his death, and having by dying conquered death, and him that had the power of death, he was to rebuild the temple of the Lord, as he said unto the Jews—"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up;" which he fulfilled by building up the temple of his body natural, and thereby he demonstrated that he will in due time perfectly complete the temple of his body mystical, which is his church: for he is a head to all his members. He quickens them by his grace, and actuates them by his influence. By union with him they live, by communion with him they grow. His Spirit breathes through the church, which is his body, and enables the members to grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ; whereby he teaches them, and it is a great part of their growth, how to acknowledge their obligations with increasing humility to their glorified Head. He renders the salvation of Jesus finished upon the cross, the sweet subject of their spiritual song. His dying love they would keep ever in mind; they would have it always warm upon their hearts, and always upon their tongues. His passion on the tree is their never ceasing theme: God forbid, say they, that we should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this they glory, and in this alone, with their voices, and with every musical instrument; but chiefly with the melody of their hearts, they endeavour to praise him, who was slain, and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood. It becometh them well in the house of their pilgrimage, thus to sing the triumphs of the worthy Lamb: for it is to be in their Father's house the most blessed subject of their endless song. The ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, and the great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, harping with their golden harps, in full concert join in praising the crucified Immanuel—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing. Amen. Hallelujah."

There is another Hebrew word, Sher, which the Septuagint constantly render a Song, frequently applied to the Psalms. It signifies rule and government, and is used for any principality among men. Hence it is very properly spoken of him whose kingdom ruleth over all. The Prince of Peace is one of his high titles. He is called the Prince of the kings of the earth; a Prince for ever—of whose government and peace there shall be no end. To this empire he had an unalienable and indefeasible right, being in the one Jehovah possessed of the same perfections with the Father and the Holy Spirit. But the most common view in which the Psalms consider him, is that of the God-man, King-mediator, whose principality is the most glorious reign of grace. He sits upon his throne freely to bestow all divine blessings upon his redeemed, and he is Mes-

siah the prince who was raised to his kingdom by the covenant of the eternal Three: in which he engaged to be a surety for his people; and in their nature, and in their stead, to satisfy all the offended attributes of the Father, by his holy life and death, and the Father engaged to give him a kingdom with all power in heaven and earth. Accordingly in the fulness of time he was manifested in the flesh, and for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is greatly exalted, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. The once crucified is now the enthroned Jesus, King of kings, and Lord of lords, almighty to save his people from all their sins, and from all their enemies. The glories of Immanuel in this respect are celebrated under the name of Sher, in several of the Psalms. In the xlviith Psalm, for instance, all the people are called upon to clap their hands for joy, and to shout unto God with the voice of triumph, because Jehovah Jesus is the great king over all the earth. His happy government, under which believers receive all their blessings, was to be the constant subject of their grateful song. Singing was using words and sounds to express the praises of the King of saints, and their joy in him. It was so much the ruling and leading subject, that every hymn reminded them of Messiah the prince. Whenever they were happy in their hearts, they expressed it by singing the praises of that most glorious person, who was made flesh, humbling himself to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and who thereby became the head of all principality and power. He ruleth the almighty Immanuel over every creature, and every thing, God-man upon his throne, till all his enemies, death itself, be destroyed, and then he will reign with the Father and the Spirit for ever and ever: for his reign is everlasting, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

This was the delightful theme in the book of Psalms. The Old Testament saints were never weary of celebrating Messiah their prince, the Lord and Saviour of his people, made an offering for their sins, dead, risen, and ascended to his throne. This is still the sweetest subject in the church of God. Happy are they, who have the Lord Christ ruling over their outward estate. Thrice happy they, who have him ruling in their souls. Oh what happiness is it to have set up within them the kingdom of God! which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. None have greater reason to rejoice with joy and singing, than they who have Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith. It was one principal design of those sacred hymns to keep up this holy joy, that if any were merry they might sing Psalms and be glad in the Lord. Sensible of his tender care and royal protection, with what joyful lips will they extol their king! They would have all within them to bless his holy name, and would be praising him with Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, rejoicing all the way to Sion, and making heavenly melody in their hearts unto the Lord.

These three names take in the subject of the whole book—the Hymns contain the praises of Immanuel, our sun of righteousness—the Psalms treat of his taking our nature, and in it being cut off for his people, that through his death they might live—the Songs celebrate the glories of his kingdom, both in earth and heaven, in time and eternity. Besides these names of the book of Psalms, there are several other things written in scripture concerning them, which confirm the account here given of their reference to the ever-blessed Messiah, king of saints, and which will be farther illustrated under the consideration of

CHAPTER III.

Some Passages of the Old Testament, concerning the Book of Psalms.

THESE passages are either such as command the singing of Psalms, or such as lay down rules for singing them properly: of the first sort we find frequent mention. "Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people: sing unto him, sing Psalms unto him: oh sing unto

the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord, all the earth: sing unto the Lord, bless his name, show forth his salvation from day to day. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth, make a loud noise, and rejoice, and give praise: sing unto the Lord with the harp, and the voice of a Psalm. Oh clap your hands, all ye people, shout unto God with the voice of triumph: for the Lord most high is to be feared: He is the great king over all the earth: sing forth the honour of his name, make his praise glorious: sing Psalms unto God, sing Psalms; sing Psalms to our King, sing Psalms, for it is good to sing Psalms to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely: sing ye praises with the understanding: sing ye praises with the whole heart: let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. *Amen.* Hallelujah."

In obedience to those commands, believers exhort one another to this delightful exercise: "Oh come let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation (Heb. our Jesus). Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with Psalms." And what was thus expressed in the congregation, every believer in private applies to himself and practises. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name; while I live will I praise the Lord, I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being: I will extol thee my God, O King, and I will bless thy name for ever and ever."

We have abundant authorities in the lives of believers to prove, that singing of Psalms was very early in the church. Moses composed a Psalm, which he and the whole congregation sang to the glory of their almighty Deliverer from Egyptian bondage. On the victory obtained over Sisera the captain of Jabin's host, Deborah and Barak sung a hymn of thanksgiving, recorded in the book of the Wars of the Lord. David was the sweet singer of Israel, raised up of God to indite the praises of the glorious Immanuel: the book of Psalms, which he spake by the Holy Ghost, has been in use in the church ever since his time. They made part of every day's service in the temple. They were sung by Christ, and by his apostles. Paul and Silas in prison, with their feet in the stocks, and at midnight, had liberty in their hearts to sing a Psalm unto the Lord. We know for certain, from sacred history, confirmed by profane authors, that when the whole church was come together into one place it was part of the public service to sing Psalms: for which there were rules laid down both in the Old Testament and in the New.

The principal rule was about the end proposed in singing. Why did God enjoin it in his service? And with what view did he require it to be performed by his people? he has herein clearly revealed his will. He intended to teach them to acknowledge his infinite love in Jesus, through whom all their blessings flow, and to praise him, and to thank him with joyful hearts and lips. Singing was the outward expression of their inward joy, and therefore it was accompanied with instruments of all kinds, to proclaim in the grandest manner their joy in the Lord. While the daily sacrifices were burning on the altar, they celebrated with believing hearts the atonement of the Lamb of God, and expressed their triumphing in it with all the powers of vocal and instrumental music. Thus they were commanded, Num. x. 10. "In the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginning of your months, ye shall blow with the triumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings, that they may be to you for a memorial before the Lord your God: I am the Lord your God." This commandment Hezekiah observed. After he had cleansed the temple from the pollutions of his profane predecessor, "he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets: and the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets: and Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar, and when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel: and all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded, and all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished." 2 Chron. xxix. 25,

&c. Their music was not merely to please; it was expressive. For it was a memorial. It was to call to mind the sacrifice of Immanuel, and the joy flowing from it, the greatest joy that possibly can be: for all the sacrifices pointed to him, and were instituted to keep up faith and hope in him. He was the Lamb who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, who was slain in type from the foundation of the world, and who in the fulness of time appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The apostle has proved at large in the epistle to the Hebrews, that all the sacrifices under the law were types and figures of the sacrifice of Christ, and that the benefits ascribed to them were to signify the graces which flow to his redeemed from his sacrifice: for through this alone justice was satisfied, wrath appeased, atonement made, the conscience purged from guilt, the sinner freely pardoned, fully justified, yea sanctified and perfected for ever: so that by his one offering, he saves believers from all sins and all miseries, and gives them enjoyment now of all blessings, and will secure to them eternal enjoyment. Here is the fountain of all joy. From hence flows peace with God, and love to God, with every blessing of his love. All comes through the bleeding Lamb, and is the fruit of his cross and passion. This is the glorious subject treated of in the Psalms, and the singing and the music of the Old Testament, were entirely in praise of this. While the burnt-offering was consuming on the fire of the altar, all that sound could possibly do with voices and instruments was exerted to rouse the attention, and to inflame the affections. The full concert was to excite the highest sentiments of thankfulness in the view of that one offering, which was to bear the fire of the Father's wrath, and thereby was to become an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. No blessing is beyond this. No joy is to be compared with the joy of this. If any one had been present who did not know the occasion of this wonderful rejoicing, and had asked good Hezekiah what they meant by this music, which made the very earth ring again, he would have graciously informed the inquirer—

We are now triumphing in steadfast faith of the fulfilling of the promise, that God will be incarnate, and will come to take away sin by his sacrifice; therefore we enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. We rejoice in our hearts in the future offering of the Lamb of God. Although we have divine words, in which to express our joy, yet our present sense of it is only according to our faith. When this is lively, our joy is unspeakable and full of glory: for it brings a foretaste of that fulness of joy, which we shall have, when we shall receive the end of our faith, even the eternal salvation of our souls. Then all the blessings, all the glories of heaven will come to us through the redemption that is in the blood of the Lamb. Hence, while the burnt-offering is consuming on the altar, we make the most joyful noise we possibly can, singing and triumphing in the offering of Immanuel: for we believe it will be a sweet-smelling savour unto God, and through it we shall enter within the veil, even into heaven itself. There we shall take up the same most blessed subject, and celebrate the Lamb that was slain with never-ceasing praise.

The answer, which I suppose Hezekiah would have given, is perfectly agreeable to David's own account of this matter. He relates very clearly for what end the Psalms were revealed, and were sung in the temple service. We find it thus described, 1 Chron. xvi. "David appointed the Levites to minister before the ark, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel," ver. 4, and again, ver. 7, "Then on that day David delivered first this Psalm to thank the Lord into the hand of Asaph and his brethren: Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people: sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk you of all his wondrous works: glory ye in his holy name, let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord."

We have in this passage a very clear description of the design of the book of Psalms. It was first to record; the word signifies to cause to be remembered. The Psalms were a standing memorial, to bring into mind the wonderful love of the ever-blessed Trinity in saving sinners through Jesus Christ, and to keep it fresh and lively upon the hearts of believers. We are apt to forget this our greatest good, and therefore God has graciously recorded it in his word. Therein he has

promised to sanctify the memory to retain it, and in the use of the Psalms he bestows this blessing. When they are read and mixed with faith, then they are meditated on with delight, sung with melody, and help to keep the heart warm in its attachment to the beloved Jesus. When they are thus treasured up in the mind, and brought into constant use, believers learn, in singing them, to rejoice in the infinitely perfect sacrifice of Immanuel, and to triumph in his divine righteousness. The Psalms are the means appointed of God to answer those ends; and they do by his grace. They stir up the pure minds of his people by way of remembrance. They afford them proper matter, and choice words, and when sung with significant sounds, they excite affections to Jesus, as holy and as happy as they can be on this side of heaven.

The use of the Psalms was also to thank: "O give thanks unto the Lord: for his mercy endureth for ever," seems to have been the chorus of all the ancient hymns. The word which we translate to thank, signifies to give the hand to God, as an acknowledgment that all power was his. The hand is power. Our power extends as far as our hand reaches. The hand of God is every where, and his power is infinite. The custom of paying homage in ancient times explains this usage of the word: 1 Chron. xxix. 23, "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king, instead of David his father, and prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. 24. And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David submitted themselves unto Solomon the king—Heb. gave the hand under Solomon the king." This was an expressive ceremony: they kneeled down and put their hands under his; thereby confessing that their power was subject to his; and in this manner they paid him homage. There is a curious letter extant of king Hezekiah, which further explains both the expression and the custom. He says in it to the people, 2 Chron. xxx. 8, "Be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves, Heb. give the hand unto the Lord," fall down before him, and ascribe all your power to the Lord; acknowledge him to have all power in heaven and earth. Thus give the honour due unto his name. Confess that all your good comes from him, and that he keeps you from all evil. Every blessing which you receive in earth, or hope for in heaven, acknowledge to be from the good pleasure of his own will, and to the praise of the glory of his free grace. Most of the Psalms were written, and should be sung, with this spirit. What David felt in his own heart at the free-will offerings of the people towards the building of the temple, the same he would excite in others, when they read or sing the Psalms. 1 Chron. xxix. 10, &c. "Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation, and David said, Blessed be thou Lord God of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever: thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all: both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thy hand is power and might, and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all: now, therefore, our God we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name." How delightfully does he here describe one great end of singing Psalms. It was to ascribe to the Lord all the glory of his word, and works, and ways—with voices and instruments, but chiefly with the music of the heart, to praise him for his goodness, and to bless him, because his mercy endureth for ever.

There is another word used, 1 Chron. xvi. 4. The Psalms were to record, and to thank, and to praise (Heb. Hellel) the Lord God of Israel. But this has been treated of in the beginning of the second chapter. It is the running title of the Psalms, and signifies the action of light in the material world, and from thence is applied to the action of the Sun of righteousness in the spiritual world. Singing psalms was not only to remind us of him, but also to lead us to ascribe to him all the blessings of nature and grace, of earth and heaven. All are from him—the gifts of his free unmerited love, and call for the tribute of constant thankfulness. He created the sun, and ordained it to dispense every earthly blessing, that it might be a lively picture of the true Light, who communicates spiritual life, with all its comforts. While the believer looks upon the most glorious Immanuel in this view, and has a warm sense of his obligations to him,

how sweet is the exercise of faith! He finds the courts of the Lord to have some of the blessedness of the palace itself. Such they were to him who said, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy courts, they will be still praising thee. Selah." They will be still acknowledging their debt in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs: which is the very employment of the saints round the throne, and which is the divine ordinance to express our communion with them, and to bring us a foretaste of their happiness.

From this passage in Chronicles we see the use of the Psalms in the Old Testament, and for what end they were then sung in the church. It was to remind believers of the wonderful person and of the divine works of the incarnate Jehovah, that they might admire his matchless beauty, and adore him for his most precious love. With happy and thankful hearts they used daily to sing of him in the temple service. The concert will never be excelled upon this earth, and the effect which accompanied it, will only be equalled in heaven. The subject—the number of voices and instruments—the excellence of the music and of the performance—and the divine approbation which crowned the whole, by a miracle confirming the faith and strengthening the hopes of the congregation; these are most nobly described in 2 Chron. v. 11, 12, &c. Solomon had finished the temple, and had brought the ark of the covenant into the holy of holies: "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course: also the Levites, who were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets: it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. And when they lift up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever; that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord: so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." All Israel met upon this occasion, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath, unto the river of Egypt. They came to the dedication of the temple, knowing that it was a type of the body of Christ, and prefigured his coming from heaven to dwell with men on the earth. The filling the temple with glory was to teach them that a person in Jehovah was to tabernacle in the manhood of Christ. In him the fulness of the Godhead was to dwell bodily, and out of his fulness they should receive grace for grace. While they were looking forward with joyful hope, and singing the praises of this most blessed event, the Lord gave them the sensible proof, that he would come and inhabit the temple of his body, and would also come and dwell in their hearts by faith. Once in the end of the world God was manifest in the flesh, but in every age he has visited his people with his presence, and blessed them with his love, while they have been with thankful hearts ascribing to him all the glory of their salvation. When he has thus disposed them to give him the honour due unto his name, then he has brought them into a proper temper to receive the greatest communications of his grace. For the most high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity vouchsafes to dwell in the humble and contrite heart. The King of kings admits the meek and lowly to the nearest approach, yea, to the most intimate familiarity with him. The highest resides with the lowest. With them the almighty Sovereign keeps his court, according to his promise—"I will dwell with you, and will walk among you, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." When he smiles upon them with his reconciled countenance, and excites in them holy love and humble adoration: oh what an happiness is it to behold the King in his beauty, even here by faith. The soul thus enamoured with him will find it a most delightful employment to sing his praises, and cannot help breaking out into psalms and hymns of thankfulness. These are the appointed means of testifying its sacred joy. In them the saints above have their heavenly exercise, and the saints below have often in the use of the same means a foretaste of the glory to be revealed.

When Zerubbabel and his brethren began to rebuild the temple after the captivity, the work was entered upon with singing of psalms. "And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel; and they sang together by course, in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord: because he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever towards Israel." Ezra iii. 10, 11. The words to praise, and to give thanks, are the same as in the fore-cited place in Chronicles, and applied to the same person, even to the Desire of all nations, who was to come and fill the second temple with his glory—"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts:" Hag. ii. 7, which was really accomplished, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Then the Lord came to his temple, and his disciples saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Of him also sang Nehemiah, as mentioned in chap. xii. He repaired the wall of Jerusalem, and ended it with praising and giving thanks to the Lord God of Israel, singing psalms unto him with voices and instruments of music, according to the commandment of David the man of God. From these instances it is plain that the general subject of the Psalms was to ascribe to the incarnate Jehovah all the honour of saving sinners. The sweet psalmist of Israel frequently calls upon the church to sing psalms to the Saviour's praise, particularly in Psalm xcii., which was constantly sung on the sabbath, the day of praise; in Psalms xcv., xcvi., xcviii., &c. And he does this very remarkably in the hundredth Psalm, wherein he calls upon believers to join in this delightful work, and assigns several reasons for their encouragement to do it with the warmest gratitude of their hearts. The title is,

A Psalm of Confession, viz. to God for his goodness, and for the wonders which he hath done for the children of men.

1. O all the earth make the air ring with the praises of Jehovah.

2. Serve ye Jehovah with heartfelt joy: come ye into his presence with the highest praises you can give.

3. Be ye certain, that Jehovah is the very Alehim, he hath made us, and not we ourselves, we are his people, and the flock under his pastoral care:

4. Enter ye into his gates with confession, into his courts with ascribing to him the praise of giving you every thing useful, pay ye homage to him, bless ye his name:

5. For Jehovah is good, his mercy is for ever, and his faithfulness is from generation to generation.

When believers in their church service used to sing this psalm, they acknowledged in it the goodness of God to them, and had in their hearts sentiments of his loving kindness, such as these:—

1. O, all ye inhabitants of the world, who have found redemption through faith in the blood of the Lamb, join together to make his praise to be heard: sing unto Jehovah a new song, sing praises unto him lustily with a good courage:

2. Serve ye Jehovah with a free spirit, singing and making melody in your hearts unto him: come ye into his presence having now access with confidence, and let the high praises of God be in your mouth, ascribing to him all the glory of your salvation:

3. Be ye certain that Jehovah is the very Alehim, the Three in covenant to save sinners: for he has made us, and not we ourselves, we neither made ourselves creatures, nor new creatures in Christ Jesus—he gave us our being, and our well being—we have nothing of our own but sin; and he has made us his free subjects by redeeming us from the bondage of sin, yea, we are his beloved flock, and he is our good shepherd, who will give grace and glory to his people, and to the sheep of his pasture:

4. O come ye then into his gates with thankful acknowledgment of his infinite goodness to your souls; meet him in the great congregation, and join all the redeemed, who in earth and heaven are with one heart giving blessing and honour and glory and power, to God and the Lamb.

5. For Jehovah is good, and doeth good, his mercy is to be celebrated in his church militant from age to age, and his never failing faithfulness is to be your subject of never ending praise in the church triumphant.

Oh for such holy affections as this Psalm requires. Reader, art thou acquainted with the subject, and art thou indeed a partaker of that thankfulness of which it treats? Oh beg of him then to give thee a growing sense of thine utter unworthiness of the least mercy. This is gospel poverty of spirit, and this will lead thee to pray for a more thankful acknowledgment of the goodness of God, flowing from the happy experience of its blessings, and influencing the whole man to praise him for them. To this grateful temper the very reading of the Psalm will be as an ordinance, and the singing of it with the melody of the heart will be a feast.

From these authorities of the Old Testament it is plain that the subject of the Book of Psalms, and the singing them, were intended to excite in believers the warmest sentiments of gratitude. The love of God manifested in saving sinners through Jesus Christ, is herein described with the true sublime both of style and sentiment; and when any Psalm was sung, if the heart felt the subject, and made harmony there, then it became a delightful, as well as an acceptable service. But we shall see clearer evidence of this matter if we attend to

CHAPTER IV.

Some Passages in the New Testament concerning the Book of Psalms.

The quotations are very numerous. Christ and his apostles often refer to the Psalms, and make a direct application of them; for they all treat of him, as indeed the whole volume of revelation does. He is the spirit and life of all the Bible; but there is no part so particularly, and so frequently applied to him, as the Book of Psalms. We know the subject of the cxth from infallible authority —it is the heavenly government of King-mediator, who is David's son, and yet David calleth him his Lord: for he was God and man in one Christ. His own use of the Psalms is very remarkable: he sung them and quoted them. At his last passover he joined with his apostles in the Psalms commonly used upon that occasion. St. Matthew says, "when they had sung an hymn," which is supposed to be part of the grand hallelujah, begining at the cxiiith, and ending with the cxviiith Psalm. Hereby our Lord not only made use of, but also applied those divine hymns to himself, he being indeed the very paschal Lamb slain in type from the foundation of the world, and now about to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And after he had by his sufferings and death made a full atonement, and was risen from the dead, he reproved his two disciples as they were going to Emmaus, and he said unto them, (Luke xxiv. 25.) "O ye without understanding, how slow of heart are ye to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory? And beginning at Moses, he expounded unto them from all the prophets, the things written of himself in all the scriptures." And among the rest he expounded unto them out of the Psalms, as his custom was: for when he appeared to his apostles to confirm them in the belief of his resurrection, he said unto them, "These are the words, which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understandings that they might understand the scriptures." Here he declares that the Psalms were written concerning himself. Not only here and there a passage, or an allusion, not only the quotations in the New Testament, but the whole volume throughout is concerning him. Upon whatever occasion the Psalmist composed any of them, yet it was only a case to speak upon, in order to intoduce what was to be said concerning the divine person, and the divine work of the Messiah. This is the spiritual use and design of the Psalms. And every man, whose understanding the Lord has opened, as he did his disciples, can see them in this light. The veil being taken away, he beholds Christ with open

face, and every Psalm shows to him some lovely feature of his most lovely Saviour. Therein he reads of the divine and human nature of Immanuel, his life and death, his resurrection and ascension, his kingdom and glory. He understands the scriptures, and with the joy of his heart receives what is therein written concerning the God of his salvation.

Agreeably to our Lord's own use of the Psalms, we find the whole church of believers with one accord using them in the same manner. The instance recorded in Acts iv. is remarkable, because the reference which they made to the Psalms, indisputably proves, that they are written concerning Christ. Peter and John had been imprisoned for preaching Jesus, but being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them: and when they heard that, they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and said, "Lord, thou art God, who hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who, by the mouth of thy servant David, hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ: for of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Here the whole church under the special influence of the Holy Spirit applies the second Psalm to Christ, and declares its accomplishment in him—he being of a truth the very person of whom it treats: which is decisive evidence, and must determine the point even to a demonstration with all that believe the scriptures.

It is not to be wondered, then, that the apostles should follow the same rule in explaining the Psalms. Peter quotes them and refers them to Christ. In his first sermon recorded Acts ii. he applies the xvith Psalm to the resurrection of Christ, and he brings the cxth to prove, that Christ had all power in heaven and earth, and should sit at the right hand of Jehovah, until all his enemies should be made his footstool. In the fourth chapter of the Acts, he shows that Christ was the stone set at nought by the Jewish builders, who nevertheless should be made the head of the corner, as it is in the cxviiith Psalm. Peter had no doubt concerning the application of the Psalms to Christ, and his beloved brother Paul shows he was of the same opinion.

We have an account of his manner of preaching among the Jews: "He used to reason with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Christ." And among the other scriptures he did not forget the Psalms: for we, in Acts xiii. have a whole sermon of his, an inestimable treasury of his scripture learning, in which he quotes several Psalms, and directly applies them to Christ, as he also does in his other writings. His epistle to the Hebrews abounds with references, twenty-nine at least. The third and fourth chapters are a comment on the xcvth Psalm: as the seventh chapter is on the cxth; and the tenth is on the xlth. Whoever will attend to the manner in which the apostle reasons upon these passages, will readily perceive, that he does not enter upon any formal proof of the design of the book of Psalms, or of Christ's being the subject of them. He does not aim at any such thing; but takes it for granted, and argues upon it as an established truth. Indeed it was at that time the belief of the whole church. There was, then, no doubt but all scripture treated of him—"to him give ALL the prophets witness"—he was their one subject. But more especially in the Psalms he was set forth, and was to be highly exalted, with all the powers of poetry, and with the sweetest sounds of instruments and voices. These hymns were inspired to celebrate his matchless fame and renown; that whenever believers felt themselves happy in the knowledge and love of Jesus, here they might find proper matter and suitable words to raise their gratitude, as high as it can be on this side of heaven We have also the apostle's practice and experience to recommend his use of the Psalms. He sung them with delight, as well as quoted them with propriety. His love to Jesus ran as high as love ever will upon earth. He speaks of him continually as

the perfect delight of his soul, on whom he had placed all his affections, and whom he found every day worthy of more love than his narrow heart could contain. Oh how precious was his Saviour, when he could say—"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea doubtless, and I do count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Happy Paul! what must he have seen in Jesus, who could count it an honour to suffer shame for his name, and an infinite gain to win Christ, though with the loss of all things? Oh happy, thrice happy man, who could carry the cross of Christ, and esteem it as his crown. God forbid, says he, that I should glory in any thing, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: for I count not my life dear to myself, so as I may but live and die fulfilling his will. And this was not a flight of fancy, or a mere rant of enthusiasm, but it was cool sober love, and arose from real experience of the preciousness of Jesus to his heart. This heavenly lover was the subject of his songs in the worst house of his painful pilgrimage. He was so truly in body, and soul, and spirit, devoted to his Jesus, that how much soever he suffered, yet he could rejoice in the Lord. Oh what a proof did he give of it!—sufficient to shame our highest professions of attachment to the dear Redeemer. When he had been beaten with many and cruel stripes, put into a dismal dungeon, and even there, with his feet in the stocks, his heart was then full of gratitude, and in tune to make delightful melody unto the Lord, yea, brake out into Psalms of praise—"At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God" with a loud voice; for the prisoners heard them. Oh for more faith in Jesus to fill us more with this thankful and praising spirit. Lord, pour it out abundantly for thy mercies' sake upon all those, who believe in thy holy name: let us make our boast of thee all the day long, and praise thy name for ever.

From these instances it is evident, that the New Testament church understood the Psalms in the same light as the Old. Believers always sung them with the same view, with hearts and voices making melody unto the Lord Christ. He himself confirmed this use of them: for he joined in this part of religious worship. The apostles quoted the Psalms, and directly applied them to their blessed Lord. Yea, when the church met together in one place, the Psalms were not only read and sung, but some abuses in singing them are corrected, which will lead me to consider,

CHAPTER V.

Rules laid down in Scripture for singing them aright.

Singing of Psalms is a divine ordinance, and has an inward and an outward service. The inward consists in the proper frame and affection of the renewed and spiritual mind; for no man can use the Psalms as an ordinance of God, who has not received the Spirit of God: without him we can do nothing, being dead in trespasses and sins. And after he is received, he is the continual breath of spiritual life, yea, as much as the air we breathe is of natural life. Every spiritual sensation of peace, comfort, and joy in God the Father, is from the divine agency of the Lord the Spirit. Every act of religious worship is performed acceptably by his strengthening us mightily in the inner man, and giving us the will and the power. If we pray aright, it is in the Holy Ghost. If we hear aright, it is by his blessing on the word preached. If we sing aright, it is by the same Spirit: and therefore we are not only commanded to seek his assistance in all we do, but also a growing and increasing measure of his graces and gifts. Thus the apostle directs the Ephesians in their singing of Psalms, "Be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in Psalms," &c. This is not meant of receiving him at first; for it is spoken to believers, who had the Spirit, but it relates to their thirsting after more, how much soever they had attained, still more of the Spirit's fulness, it being in him infinite, and always in us finite. We never have so much,

but we may have more; and when we have the most, our thirst is then the greatest. This is an holy thirst, to which there is a divine invitation—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters of life." And a divine promise—"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." And when this promise is fulfilled, and the Holy Spirit is received, we are still in faith to use means for the increasing of his graces and gifts; among which means the apostle recommends—"Speaking to yourselves in Psalms," &c. He supposes their singing would tend to their mutual edification: for the words are in the plural number, and denote their joining together in this holy exercise. He also commands the Colossians to instruct and to admonish one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, herein using the grace given both for its exercise, and also for its improvement. And this true manner of singing comes from the Spirit, and increases the fruits of the Spirit.

It comes from the Spirit; because none can perform it, but the new creature in Christ Jesus. It is a spiritual service, in which only the spiritual man can join. No one can make any melody acceptable to God, who has not been first a partaker of the Holy Ghost. He is the Lord and Giver of life; without whom all men are dead in trespasses and sins. He only can quicken and make the soul alive to God. It requires his almighty power, and it belongs to his covenant office. And when he, the Spirit of life, makes any one free from the law of sin and death, then he is a child of God. He is made to know it, and to believe it: for he has received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries Abba, Father. In the sense of this love shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, he begins to rejoice in God, as his God. Trusting to what Jesus is to him, that he has satisfied for his sins, has wrought out his righteousness, and is now standing in the presence of God for him, he sees himself accepted in the Beloved, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. Hereby his heart becomes reconciled to God, and he finds the truth of what is written—"We love him, because he first loved us." Now he has David's affection, and he can join heartily in singing with him—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases: who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies."

Thus the right singing the praises of God comes from the Spirit, and it also increases the fruits of the Spirit. It is one of the appointed means of improving them. True grace is always operative, and grows by the fruit which it bears. If the believer be rejoicing, singing will add to his joy, as it is written, "Is any in a happy frame? Let him sing Psalms;" and that will make him happier. It is the divine promise, and cannot fail: he shall increase his joy in the Lord. Is any afflicted? Psalms will refresh and comfort him: Paul and Silas sore whipped, and put into the stocks, sung a psalm at midnight. The fulness of the Spirit in the sweet singer of Israel, went out much this way. He sang most, and praised best, of all the saints of God. He sang in all frames, and upon all occasions: let us follow his example, and be speaking much and often to one another, in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, seeking thereby to be filled with a growing measure of the Holy Spirit.

If thou enquirest, How shall I obtain this inestimable blessing? The command is—"ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find"—whoever is made sensible he stands in need of the assistance of the Holy Spirit is only required to ask, and the promise is—"Every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth: if a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" How gracious are these words! How encouraging are they to every one who has any concern about his salvation, to desire the Holy Spirit may be given to him, to enable him to trust

in Jesus, and to find the Father's love in him: and they leave every man without excuse, who lives and dies without those blessings, which God has promised to give to every one that asketh.

Whoever is a partaker of the Spirit, has a new nature in Christ Jesus, and has a new understanding given him, whereby he is enabled to discern and to judge of spiritual things: for thus runs the promise—"He shall lead you into all truth." And the apostle prays for the fulfilling of it to the Ephesians—"May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened." The Holy Spirit acts upon men as rational creatures. He does not treat them as if they were stones or brutes; but he makes the truths of the gospel clear to the mind, and desirable to the will. He opens the eyes of the understanding to see the object, and then presents it in its glorious beauty and attracting loveliness. The renewed mind beholds, admires, and loves it; and then, animated with this love, can sing its praises. Holy men of God in the Old Testament sung with knowledge. Ignorance was not the mother of their Psalmody. They were well acquainted with what they sung. The royal prophet says, he employed his understanding in this devout exercise, as well as his harp and his voice. Hear him, how earnestly he calls upon others to extol his beloved Jesus—"Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises: for God is the King of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding." He would have them to mind what they were about, and to understand what they sung; lest they should utter lies unto the Lord, or offer to him a sacrifice without a heart. Consider whom you have to deal with—how great and good a God—observe how you praise him: engage all your mental powers in this delightful work, that it may be holy, acceptable to God, and a reasonable service.

The apostle agrees in sentiment with the Psalmist: for thus he speaks to the Corinthians: "If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful: what is it, then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." Singing is unfruitful, unless the understanding go with it. Unless the mind be profited and God be honoured, it is only empty sound. But when we sing by the Spirit, then he will teach us to sing with the understanding also. He will open the subject to us, will give a fixed attention to it, will bring the mind into tune, and will keep us looking at the sense more than at the sound.

Is it so with thee, O my soul? Enquire carefully. Art thou led by the Spirit in thy singing? Does he enlighten thy mind, and guide thee into the knowledge of the subject in which thou art engaged? Take heed, and be often examining thyself—how thy mind is affected—lest thou shouldest present unto the Lord the song of fools.

But chiefly keep thy heart diligently: because out of it are the issues of life. The man is what his heart is. If this be dead to God, nothing in him is alive: if this be right with God, all will be right. If he has a clean heart, and a right spirit renewed within him, the Holy Ghost has made him a new creature in Christ Jesus, and has won the will and the affections over to God. This is his principal office in the conversion of sinners. He therefore discovers truth to the understanding, in order that it may become desirable, and that the heart may be properly influenced by it. The heart is the commanding faculty. When this has once tasted the sweetness of the Father's love in Jesus, it will engage the whole man to seek for more. Love is very active, and will do or suffer much to obtain and to preserve the beloved object. Set this spring agoing, it will move all the wheels. The hands will work for God. The feet will run the way of his commandments. Love will make heavy burdens not grievous to be borne: love will carry them a long time, and faint not. Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love which he had unto her. The labour of love is always delightful. When we know God to be our Father in Jesus, and have his love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, then his service becomes perfect freedom: then duty is ennobled into privilege; then

obedience becomes willing and filial: the beloved child finds free access to the Father's throne, and receives blessed communications of his grace: for which his thankful heart offers the sacrifice of praise, and it comes up with a sweet savour acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. This is the melody of the heart. While it feels its infinite debt to free grace, is deeply convinced of its utter unworthiness, and is kept humble by the abiding sense of its imperfections, and of its indwelling corruptions, it is in a right frame to exalt the exceeding riches of divine mercy. Then it is disposed to give God all his glory. This he requires as his due, and it becometh well the righteous to pay it. When the heart is made willing to ascribe every good to his holy name, then it is right with God. All within is now in tune to join every golden harp, and every joyful tongue in heaven, which are ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.

This is the chief requisite in singing Psalms. The heart makes the best music. The finest compositions, ever so well executed with instruments and voices, are not a divine concert, unless the heart accompany them. David knew this well, and therefore he set his affections to the highest pitch of praise, and he brought all of them to join. His whole heart entered into the performance, and rendered the concert full—"I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify thy name for evermore: for great is thy mercy towards me." Thy special covenant mercy is such towards me, that my very thoughts cannot rise up to its greatness: how then can I utter forth all its praise? I cannot; no, not even half of it. But though the debt be so great, that I cannot count it up, yet I will the more extol thee for it from day to day: I would engage my affections, and give them all up to this heavenly employment. I would have my whole soul in it. And yet the debt remains, rather increases. Oh for a more enlarged heart! My praises continued are only acknowledgments, and I want them continued with growing humility—more in earth and more in heaven. There I shall praise better, when my heart will have nothing in it, but humble gratitude. Yet here I will not give over; but will carry on my joyful song, till I can sing in a higher strain. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all within me bless his holy name: O give thanks unto him for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. Hallelujah."

The apostle Paul had his portion in the same mercy, and had the same grateful sense of it: he sang the Psalms of David with the spirit of David. What he practised himself he has recommended to others. He has given us some rules about singing in the congregation, and he chiefly confines them to the heart accompanying the voice. Thus he directs the Ephesians—"Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord, giving thanks alway for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." He would not have them meet together, as they formerly had done, to feast without fear, and to drink unto drunkenness, inciting one another to greater riot and excess by wanton and profane songs: which was the custom at most of the heathen banquets. They used to try to fill one another with wickedness. But ye have not so learned Christ. Seek ye to be filled with his Spirit, and use the means appointed for that purpose: among which, singing of Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, is one of the chief. These several names are expressive of the different subjects treated of in the sacred poetry; hymns are in praise of Immanuel, spiritual songs are in praise of his spiritual kingdom, according to the sense of the words in the Hebrew, and according to the translation of them in the Septuagint, as was before shown. The manner of singing them, it is here said, was by joining together with their voices, but especially with their hearts. From thence comes the best melody. Harmony in sound is pleasant in our ears, but harmony in affection is the music which enters into the ears of the Lord of hosts. "My son, give me thy heart;" he will have no service without it. Prayer, obedience, praise, every offering must come from the heart. He looks at this, and this in all, and above all. This he accepts, and testifies his delight in: for it is the same sacrifice of praise, which will for ever delight him. The church triumphant

has begun the song, which will be perfectly and for ever pleasing to the Lord; and when we meet below with one faith to glorify our one Lord, then we enjoy the communion of saints. We have one heart with them—join in the same subject of praise to their Lord and our Lord—our harmony is theirs—our happiness is theirs—it is one and the same communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit. And though we cannot raise our song to so high a pitch, or continue it without ceasing, as the saints above do; yet we entirely agree with them, and are trying to make better music in our hearts every day, until we see their Jesus and our Jesus face to face. He loves us, as well as them: for he is our Immanuel: and our souls rejoice in him together with them. We love him, we serve him, we bless him, as humbly, and as thankfully, as we can; yea in all things we would be giving of thanks to his holy name. Oh for more love, more thankfulness, more devotedness to our precious Lord Jesus Christ. This is our daily prayer, and our constant pursuit. Blessed and eternal Spirit, purify our hearts by faith, and increase in them a sense of his wondrous love to us, that we may be growing in love to him, until he vouchsafe to admit us into his presence, and give us to thank him with never-ceasing songs of praise.

In another place the apostle treats of the same subject, only varies the expression a little. He recommends singing of Psalms to the Colossians, as an ordinance of God for increasing the graces of his people—"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord: and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." The Colossians had put on the new man, and the apostle exhorts them to put on the ornaments and endowments peculiar to their new nature, and he mentions several of them: in which he would have them to be growing daily: and he proposes to them the word of God, as the best means for this purpose. He would have it treasured up in their hearts, and inwardly digested—"dwelling richly in them in all wisdom" for knowledge and practice. He includes both: because this wisdom was for edification—they were to teach and to admonish one another. What each had learnt out of the scriptures was to be of public benefit to the church. And the way of doing this is particularly mentioned—they were to sing together with grace in their hearts. All is discord within, until we are taught by grace, free effectual grace. But when we believe the doctrines of grace, then harmony comes in, and we learn to ascribe every good to the mere mercy of God. We receive his blessings, and he receives all the praise of them. Then grace is in the heart: it is there not only to reconcile the sinner to the way of salvation by faith alone, but also to make him in love with it, and to keep him willing to praise God for it with his lips and life. Oh how good a thing is it, that the heart be thus established with grace! for then the affections will be fixed upon the right object, and the whole soul will be in harmony with the truth as it is in Jesus Free grace doctrines felt in their power in the heart make heavenly melody. Every faculty is in tune, and inclined to bear its part in blessing the name of the Lord. The understanding sees it right, the will chooses, the heart loves to give him all the praise, and the mouth joins to glorify him with joyful lips, singing unto the Lord—the God-man—Immanuel is the subject of this happy song. He is the God of all grace. It is a joyful and pleasant thing to be thanking him for it: yea, it is a foretaste of the saints' fulness of joy. The truly humble believer, seeing the exceeding riches of grace, gladly joins his elder brethren round the throne in praising the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the temple of God shall be complete, and the last believer joined to the spiritual building, then the top-stone shall be brought forth with shouting—grace—grace unto it—glory be to free grace for ever and ever.

To the same purpose the apostle James, ch. v. 13, teaching believers how to behave in every state, directs them, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms." Affliction should send him to prayer, for grace to bear it and to improve it: joy to singing of Psalms, to express thankfulness to God. Is any merry? that is a proper season, though not the only season. Prayer is necessary at all times, though it be most needful in

affliction: and so singing; it is not only needful when we are rejoicing, in order that our joy may centre in the Lord, but sometimes singing will beget spiritual joy, and will awaken it in the afflicted heart. Paul and Silas were in great outward distress, yet they sang a psalm in prison. The apostles sang an Hymn after the sacrament, although they knew their Lord was going to suffer, and they were greatly troubled. In that sorrowful hour they sang. Singing is always seasonable, but especially when the heart is happy. "Is any among you merry? Let him sing Psalms." Is he in a good frame of mind, rejoicing in the bounty of God, either for temporal or spiritual mercies? Let him sing Psalms to the praise and glory of his benefactor: this is a proper expression of gratitude for favours received, and will be the means of securing them: for since his happiness comes from a good God, and arises from communion with God in Christ, it is fit and meet that he should ascribe it to the right object, and in a way of God's own appointing. A divine Hymn upon the subject of praise (of which there are many) sung with heart-felt thankfulness, is a grateful service. The Lord requires such an acknowledgment, and it becometh well the just to be thankful—yea he has vouchsafed to reveal the very words, in which he requires it to be paid him; and when all within us blesses his holy name, rejoicing in the Lord, he would have the outward man to join, and to declare with the melody of his lips, how happy he is in his heart. Thus in singing the praises of our God we shall find fresh reason to praise him. He will certainly meet us in his own means, and bless us in his own ways. We shall not wait upon him in vain. The means of his appointing cannot fail of answering the end. He has promised to put honour upon his own appointments, and his word cannot be broken. The joyful Christian is commanded to sing the praises of his God, and his heart shall be thereby kept in holy joy, yea, it shall be increased. His joy shall abound: and when believers sing, as they are commanded, with one another, it shall tend to their mutual edification. It shall stir them up to greater thankfulness, and excite warmer affection to the God of their salvation. Singing psalms is a church ordinance, and as such it is blessed. The Lord will not forsake the assembly of his saints. When they are met together to praise him, he will be in the midst of them, and will manifest his acceptance, both of their persons and services. This will make their attendance upon him delightful. When he lifts up the light of his countenance upon them, how can they help singing what they feel? Now they experience he has bought them with his blood, and saved them from hell, has wrought out their righteousness, and will give them his heaven, it becometh them well to praise him, and to rejoice in his holy name. He has made them blessed at present, and they shall be blessed for evermore. Their blessedness comes from a never-failing spring. They are the one true church, of which it is said—"Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Singing is their heaven in the church triumphant. They have the fulness of joy from God and the Lamb, and they acknowledge it with humble adoration, and a grateful song of never-ending praise. The innumerable company of the redeemed will find their heaven of heavens in enjoying communion with the holy Trinity, and in singing the glories of that mercy which is from everlasting to everlasting.

In this passage the apostle James supposes that joy and singing agree well together. So they do. They depend on one another as the cause and the effect. The melody of the heart breaks out, and expresses itself with the melody of the mouth. A heart made sensible of God's love in Christ has the greatest reason to rejoice, and will be ready to show it in every way of God's appointment, particularly in singing the praises of his wondrous love. Does the prophet, happy in his soul, declare, "My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips"—true Christians can gladly join him. They have returned to God in faith, and have found redemption through the blood of the Lamb. They know in whom they have believed, and are satisfied of the Father's love to them in his dear Son. Now they can delight in God. It is their privilege to rejoice in him as their God: yea it is their bounden duty; he calls upon them to express their sense of his goodness in songs of praise. This joy in God is one of the chief ingredients in psalm singing. The heart cannot make pleasant melody, unless joy be there: for

the Lord God has an unalienable right to the service of the whole man, but we never acknowledge it, until we become his children through faith in Christ Jesus; in whom we have free access unto the Father. Then, persuaded of his precious love to us, we love him again, and in thankfulness give up ourselves, with all we have and are, to his service and glory. From hence arises our joy in God, and every expression of it; which were required of all men by the holy law, but are only fulfilled by those who have the faith of the gospel. An unpardoned sinner cannot possibly rejoice in God: because this holy joy is the fruit of the Spirit, and is the consequence of believing. Thus David—"The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusted in him, and I am helped, therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my song will I praise him." What the prophet had experienced himself, the same he wishes for others—"Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice, let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee." And when a company of these happy people meet together it is the delight of their hearts to join in praises to their God and Saviour. "O come let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a cheerful noise to the Rock of our salvation: let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with Psalms." With these words we always begin the reading of the scriptures in our church service. And what could be more suitable? How proper is it in a congregation of believers to call upon one another to join in the praises of the common Saviour, that we may strengthen our mutual joy in him. All true joy comes from him, and every acknowledgement of it, inward and outward, is therefore required, in order to preserve and to increase our rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ. He deserves all our joy—the loveliness of Immanuel—his love to us—the blessings of his love—how many—how great—how lasting! these should encourage us to be glad in him now with great joy. But the well-grounded prospect, which hope has, of finding in him infinite and everlasting blessings, should lead us to rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This prospect has brightened the darkest day; it has enabled sufferers greatly to rejoice, when in heaviness through manifold temptations: it has supported them under every fiery trial. Nothing could extinguish the joy. It has lived, and triumphed in the martyr's breast, even in the agonies of the most painful death. Faith reads, and with hope looks out for (and it is a hope that will never be ashamed) the accomplishment of this faithful promise—"The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Dost thou find, O my soul, any of this holy joy? Canst thou sing Psalms with the understanding, with the heart, and with gladness in thy heart, rejoicing in the Lord? Canst thou give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ? This is the privilege of every true believer. Being saved from sin and hell, made an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, he has an interest in all things: for they are all working together, under God, for his present and eternal good. While he lives by faith, he knows it, and has the comfort of it. His heart is kept in tune, and whatever befals him, he has reason to rejoice in the Lord his God.

Thus the Lord would have his people to rejoice in him always. It is not only true in theory, that they may, but it is also true in practice, if the outward walk be in concord with the doctrine of the Psalms. This is another essential part of psalm singing. The believer should live as he sings. His life should be it, harmony with his principles. If he sees the truth as it is in Jesus, and loves in and rejoices in it, the effect of all this will certainly be outward and visible. The inward melody will be expressed in his tempers and behaviour. There will be a consistency throughout. As he lives, so he will walk, by the faith of the Son of God. Practice and principle will sweetly accord. The same sound that comes from his lips, comes also from his heart, and his whole life will be in unison. His actions sing, his tempers are in harmony, his behaviour makes up the chorus abroad and at home, the music of his heart and life gives one certain note—Jesus is mine all—I live in him—on him—to him—I would have all

within me to praise him, and all without me to show forth his praises—blessings on him for ever and ever. Amen.

If a man's life be not thus consistent with his singing, he mocks God, he deceives his neighbour, and he gives the lie to his own words. Actions are surer evidences than sounds: for they discover the settled and the last purpose of the mind. They show not only what a man talks of, but what he is determined to live by. The true character cannot be known, but from them. God only sees the heart. We know what is in it, by what comes out of it. We judge of the fountain from the stream. If the words and works be evil, so is the heart: for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, &c. these are clear facts to judge by. If such a man was to sing with a voice like an angel, it is a voice and nothing more. His actions prove it to be mere air and empty sound: yea, they demonstrate, that his heart is in perfect discord with God. He says one thing, and does the contrary. He seems to praise God, as if he was happy in his love; but he cleaves to the world, and seeks his happiness in it. He sings—"Whom have I in heaven but thee?" yet shows his supreme joy is in the earth. How can any thing that such a man sings be an acceptable service, while his heart and life are in direct opposition to the holy will of God. A Jew can sing, a Turk can join in concert with him, an infidel may play well upon an instrument; a company of Jews, Turks, and infidels, may perform the finest piece of music, and with the most harmonious sounds. They may go through the oratorio of the Messiah without one discord. But here is no melody to the Lord. They have no design to show forth the praises of Immanuel: and what is not done in faith, and to his glory, is sin. Their music is as hateful to him as any of their other vices: for self is the burden of their song. They sing to please themselves, and to please God is not in all their thoughts Oh consider this ye that come to church, and join in singing the Psalms! Is it with you an ordinance of God? Do you look upon it as such, and find it such? Does your understanding go with the Psalm, and your heart enter into it? Is it the joy of your heart? Do you sing rejoicing in God? And do you find him your one supreme blessedness all the day long? So that your life is a continued song of praise, and every action of it being subject to his holy will, preserves the harmony, and keeps up the heavenly joy. Is it thus, indeed; who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord? May nothing cause discord between you any more: but may increasing faith witness with growing comfort that you are one with God, and he is one with you. Look to Jesus. Let your eyes be fixed upon him, expecting all out of his fulness. Keep close to him. Thus you shall go on your way rejoicing; and soon you shall see him face to face, and your joy shall be full.

If all these things be put together, then we learn that singing Psalms is an ordinance of God, and one of the means of grace, instituted for the exercise and for the improvement of grace. It is commanded with a promise, and the promise is made good to this very day, as thousands of living witnesses can testify. When they have met together, understanding the subject of the Psalm, and singing it with melody in their hearts, then the Lord has accepted their praises, and increased their joy in him. They have found their affections drawn nearer to him, and he has warmed them with a sweet sense of his love. And this has not been a transient visit. It did not cease when they had done singing; but the harmony was preserved in a well-ordered walk, directed by the faith of the Son of God. They lived their songs. Peace and love dwelt in their hearts, and their joy abounded in the Lord.

But where is this sort of singing, in what place, or among what people? Who are they that find those heavenly affections exercised in it, and those happy effects from it? It is much to be lamented, that all singing of Psalms at present is not upon the right plan, and does not answer the end of its institution. I speak not of the contempt with which it is treated by the age, or of the neglect of it by many professors, but of the prevailing abuses of it among them who would be thought altogether Christians.

CHAPTER VI.

These Abuses I would particularly mention, and humbly propose a Remedy for each of them.

Some of these may seem not worthy of notice, they are such small matters: but I think there is nothing little in divine worship. The majesty of God ennobles and exalts every part of it. He has commanded us to sing Psalms, and whatever he has been pleased to command, has his authority to enforce it: and whatever he has engaged to bless, has his promise to make it the means of blessing. In keeping of it there is at present great reward. His presence will be in it, when it is rightly performed, and he will render it effectual. He will hear, he will accept, he will witness his acceptance of the praises of his people: therefore everything relating to them should be done decently and in order. We should always sing with a reverence becoming the greatness and goodness of our God, in such a manner as may best express our happiness in his love, and as may tend most to mutual edification.

If these things be considered, it will not be thought an indifferent matter, whether the Psalms be sung at all, or how they be sung—whether with, or without any heart devotion,—whether with, or without any melody of the voice—whether every believer in the congregation should sing or no—whether singing should be a trial of skill, who can bawl loudest—whether the posture should not be expressive as well as the voice—whether suitable portions of the Psalms should be chosen, or the person who gives them out should be left to choose them, often without any judgment—whether grace should be exercised in singing, or not—whether we should sing in order to increase grace, or not—whether we should sing for amusement, or for the glory of God. It is not a trifling matter how you determine those points: they enter deep into an important part of religious worship, yea, into a very high act of it, one in which we pay the noblest service we can upon earth, and indeed the nearest we can come to the service of saints and angels. How then can it be an indifferent thing, whether a believer sings Psalms or not, or whether or no he sings them with melody in his heart unto the Lord? Certainly, if he would please God in singing, he should attend to the scripture rules before laid down for directing his conduct, which compared with the analogy of faith, will regulate everything relating to the divine ordinance of Psalm singing.

One great abuse is the general ignorance of the subject of the book of Psalms. No portion of God's word is less known: many in our congregation very seldom understand what they are singing. They have not Christ in their eye, nor his glory in their view; although the design of all those hymns is to describe the love of God to sinners in Christ Jesus. They all treat of him in some view or other: for there are many extensive, and all very glorious views, in which his person, offices, works, and ways, may be considered. Some treat of his high praises as God-man, describing his person, as the infinite treasury of grace and glory. Some celebrate the matchless deeds of his life, as the Lord our Righteousness, and the complete atonement made for sin by the sacrifice of himself. Others, in language and sentiments truly sublime, sing the endless victories of his resurrection, and the prevailing efficacy of his intercession. Several of them treat of his most blessed government, when he sets up his throne in the hearts of his willing people, and saves them from sin, and death, and every enemy: while others foretel the great day of the Lord, when he will come to judge all flesh, will take his redeemed home, and the whole heaven shall be filled with his glory. Besides, the Psalms treat of this wonderful person, not only from the beginning of time, but also from the ages of eternity: they discover the undertakings of his love before all worlds in the covenant of the Trinity—his fulfilling the covenant engagements in time—and his bestowing covenant blessings from henceforth and for ever. What an extensive view do they give us of the loving kindness of Immanuel, reaching from everlasting to everlasting! And in all these respects the Psalms are of inestimable value with believers: for their use the Holy Spirit has recorded them; and herein they learn what sentiments they are to form of God the Saviour, with what gratitude they should speak of

him, and with what holy joy they should sing the triumphs of redeeming love. The Psalms were fitted for this purpose by infinite wisdom: for holy men of God spake them as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: and they are blessed for this purpose, when, with the apostle, any one can say, "I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

In order to remedy this great evil, I have prefixed the subject of every Psalm in this collection, that the congregation might have a key to the true sense, and each might know, what particular grace was to be exercised in singing it. This will help somewhat to keep up harmony in the understanding. But it will not be without some discord, until the subject treated of in the book of Psalms be made very plain, and their application to Jesus Christ be well settled. For this end I have finished some years ago a translation of the Psalms, with a treatise upon the use and design: it was computed to make two large volumes in octavo, entitled, "An Essay towards a new Translation of the Bible." In which I have been engaged, as opportunity has offered, above thirty years; but I should have published nothing more of it in my lifetime than this essay, in which the translation of the book of Psalms would have been given as a specimen of the work. It has laid me by so long, that I am not very sanguine about the publication. Yet if this little tract should be favourably received, and God should be pleased to make it useful; if some providence should afford me leisure to revise my papers, of which I have no prospect at present, and if they should then appear to me likely to promote the honour of God, and the good of his church, I should think it my duty to let my light shine before men. Yet in this, and in every thing else, I do earnestly pray, Not my will, Lord, but thine be done.

Another very great abuse arises from not treating Psalm singing as becometh a divine ordinance. There should be great respect paid to what God has appointed, and in the use of which he has promised to meet and to bless his people. We commonly call those the means of grace, to which grace is promised, and by which grace is received, and through which it is increased in the heart. Singing of Psalms is undoubtedly one of those means, but it is amongst us very much neglected, and when used, it is done in so irreverent a manner, that the end of its institution is not attained. God, as has been already proved, has enjoined and enforced it by repeated commands. He has also assigned the reason of them, namely, that whenever we find ourselves happy in him, he would have our joy to flow out this way. And what more proper and significant? singing is only expressing outwardly the melody of the heart: and God has required it of us as a just service of praise. He has furnished us both with matter and words. He has given us a divine collection of most perfect Hymns. And when we use them in humble faith, God will render them the means of exciting, of preserving, and of increasing our holy joy: for the promise is—"The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the holy one of Israel."

This promise has been made good in all ages. The blessing has come in the use of means. The church of Christ in praising him has found fresh reason to praise him. While its happy members have been singing together, he has vouchsafed to them his gracious presence, and has given them sweet communications of his heavenly love. They have sung till their hearts burnt within them, inflamed with a sense of his goodness. Then they had delightful experience of the Psalmist's words—"Praise ye the Lord; for it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: for it is pleasant, and praise is comely."

Reader, dost thou find it so? Is it a pleasure to thee to sing Psalms? Dost thou sing them as an ordinance? Dost thou in faith expect a blessing upon thy singing? And is it indeed to thee the means of grace? If it be, use them more, and thou wilt find an increasing blessing; if it be not, consider well what has been said—repent of thine abuse of this precious ordinance—and pray for grace to observe it to the honour of God, to the edification of others, and to the profit of thine own soul: the Lord give thee a right understanding in this matter.

The neglect of it as an ordinance has led many people entirely to neglect it. I have scarce ever seen a congregation, in which every one joined in singing. This

is a very great abuse, because it is defeating the end of God's institution. He commanded Psalms to be sung for mutual edification. It was to be the service of the whole church. All were to join; whereas among us it is performed by some few, and they are sometimes set by themselves in a singing gallery, or in a corner of the church, where they sing to be admired for their fine voices, and others hear them for their entertainment. This is a vile prostitution of church music, and contrary to the letter and spirit both of the Old Testament and also of the New.

The first sacred hymn upon record was sung by Moses and the children of Israel, in which Miriam and all the women joined, and sang the chorus. The second hymn mentioned is said to be sung by the people of Israel without any distinction. When the ark was brought up to the city of David, he and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing: most likely they sang the lxviiith Psalm, accompanied with harps, and psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. David frequently speaks of singing Psalms, as an ordinance in which every one should bear his part, that God might be glorified, and all might be edified. "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands; sing forth the honour of his name, make his praise glorious. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing unto thy name. Oh let the nations be glad, and sing for joy; sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the Lord." The sweet singer of Israel chooses this for his subject—"All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee;" and he pursues it through the cxlviiith Psalm. He begins with hallelujah, and intending to have a full chorus to join him in ascribing all glory to God in the highest, he calls upon the holy angels and the heavenly hosts to assist; then he addresses himself to the active powers in nature, which praise God by doing his will and obeying his decree; afterwards he calls upon the earth with every thing in it and on it, animate and inanimate; for these fulfil his commandments, and keep his laws, and so praise him: at last he comes to mankind, and requires high and low, kings and all people, princes and all judges of the earth, both young men and maidens, old men and children, to join with him in praising the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven; he also exalteth the power of the people, the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him, Hallelujah.

This was the state of the case in the Old Testament. We know from profane history, that the first Christians, in all their meetings, used to sing the praises of Jesus their God. They would not sit down to meat, or rise up, without a Psalm. Jerome says, you might have heard the ploughman and reapers in the fields singing Psalms: yea, several of them could repeat the whole book in Hebrew. Church history relates many particulars upon this subject. But the divine record is decisive. It contains directions how to sing in the congregation: they were to speak, not inwardly, but to themselves, one to another, that they might be heard, and the Psalms which they sung might tend to each other's benefit. In another place the apostle commands believers to teach and admonish one another in Psalms and Hymns, recommending such singing as would edify the congregation.

Consider those authorities, ye that have slighted this ordinance. Has it been the uniform practice of the church of God in all ages to join in singing his praises? Was it by his express command? Has he given us a collection of hymns, the very words which we are to sing? Has he promised to accept our thanks and praises, and while believers have been offering them with graceful hearts, has he constantly made them the means of increasing their joy in the Lord? Was it for the benefit of others, that the church might receive edifying, and that each might bear his part by stirring up and exciting thankfulness in one another? Oh do not then neglect such a blessed ordinance: but rather pray the Lord to enable you to rejoice with them that rejoice, to sing with them that sing. Have you not mercies to ask—why then will you not join the church in asking? Have you not mercies out of number to thank God for—why then will you not take your part in praising him for his goodness? Why will you rob yourself of the pleasure of doing it? Why will you not profit your neighbour? And why will you not give God the glory due unto his holy name? Be assured it becometh you well to

be thankful at all times and in all places, especially in the great congregation. May you have your share in the service, and your share in the blessing promised to it!

If you are convinced it is part of the public worship of God, in which you are required to join, as much as in the prayers, or in hearing the word, then take heed you join properly. You may sing, and yet greatly abuse this holy ordinance. There are many singers in the church, who take no pains either to keep the time or to follow the tune, and who thereby show they think it of no consequence how the praises of the most high God are sung. Solomon differed much from them. He thought it a great perfection in praising God, that among the many thousands of voices and instruments, which were sounding forth his praise at one time, there was not a single discord to be heard. The scripture has taken notice of it. "They all gave one sound." Why should not we do the same? Nay, is it not the practice of the people of the world? Will they suffer discords in any of their concerts? A public performer would only rise in repute with them, as he plays or sings well. Christian, consider this. Shall they, for their mere amusement study to have their music free from every thing offensive to the ear; and shall not we be equally careful? More especially as we sing to the honour of God and to the edifying of the brethren. We have a most noble subject—divine matter—divine words: we sing of one Lord with one faith. Oh for harmony in some measure suitable! it is much to be wished. I hope it will be attained. Let me earnestly recommend it to every one to sing, and to all who do sing, to learn to sing well; and, till you do, endeavour to avoid another matter of offence.

There are many in our congregations, who seem to think they sing best, when they sing loudest. You may see them often strain themselves with shouting till their faces are as red as scarlet. The worst singers commonly offend this way. A bad coarse voice quite out of tune is to be heard above all, and will take the lead in the congregation; and whenever a number of such meet together in their shouting humour, they put all into confusion. They disorder those, who would sing with feeling and affection. They drown the musical voices of good singers. They offend the outward people. And they do no good to themselves; so they entirely defeat the end of singing. If these lines should fall into the hands of any, who are sensible they have offended in this way, I would beg of them to reform this abuse. Examine your motive. Why would you be uppermost in the congregation? Is your voice the best? Do you think so? Ask one who is a judge; perhaps he may persuade you. I wish I could prevail with you to sing lower. Indeed, if you once come to feel what you sing, you will reform yourself. A great part of your singing will then be between God and your own soul; you will try to keep up melody in your heart, and that will mend both your voice and judgment. However, it will certainly put you upon trying to please both God and man in singing.

There is another very great and common abuse, which consists in the choice of improper portions. The person to whose judgment this is left is not always one of the wisest in the congregation. He may not understand the Psalms. He may misapply and profane them. It is not a rare thing for him to make them personal, and to apply the glorious things spoken of Christ to trifling parish business. I have heard the quarrels among neighbours sung over on Sundays. The clerk has chosen some passage, applicable entirely to the enemies of the Lord and his Christ, and has most grossly perverted it. The congregation had nothing to do with the dispute, and yet it was brought before them, and they were called upon in an ordinance to interest themselves in it. No doubt, this, and such like abuses, are a very great insult upon God's word and ordinance, and ought to be reformed. The people should understand the Psalm which they are going to sing, and should be well acquainted with its relation to Jesus Christ. They are all required to join; and therefore suitable portions should be chosen, in which all or the greatest part of them are interested; they should sing with one mind, and one heart, as well as in one tune: for which end the knowledge of the Psalm, and of whom, and of what it treats, are absolutely necessary. How can any one sing aright unto the Lord with grace in his heart, unless he understands whether the Psalm relates to praise or thanksgiving, to

asking mercies of God, or praising him for them—what grace was to be exercising in seeing, faith, or hope, or love—and what blessing was to be expected from it? These things should be well known, that singing may be a reasonable service, and the means of grace. And to render it such, I have collected portions suitable to most cases of a Christian's experience, and have also prefixed the subject of each. I have also directed the believer with what frame of mind to sing, and what benefit to look for from the word of promise in singing. I wish the attempt may help to make the ordinance better observed, and then I am sure it will be more blessed.

There is another thing relating to the Psalms—I cannot call it an abuse, for it is a total neglect of them. They are quite rejected in many congregations, as if there were no such hymns given by inspiration of God, and as if they were not left for the use of the church and to be sung in the congregation. Human compositions are preferred to divine. Man's poetry is exalted above the poetry of the Holy Ghost. Is this right? The hymns which he revealed for the use of the church, that we might have words suitable to the praises of Immanuel, are quite set aside: by which means the word of man has got a preference in the church above the word of God; yea, so far as to exclude it entirely from public worship. It is not difficult to account for this strange practice. Our people had lost sight of the meaning of the Psalms. They did not see their relation to Jesus Christ. This happened when vital religion began to decay among us, more than a century ago. It was a gradual decay, and went on, till at last there was a general complaint against Sternhold and Hopkins. Their translation was treated as poor flat stuff. The wits ridiculed it. The profane blasphemed it. Good men did not defend it. Then it fell into such contempt, that people were ready to receive any thing in its room, which looked rational and was poetical. In this situation, the hymn-makers find the church, and they are suffered to thrust out the Psalms to make way for their own compositions: of which they have supplied us with a vast variety—collection upon collection, and in use, too—new hymns starting up daily—appendix added to appendix—sung in many congregations, yea, admired by very high professors, to such a degree, that the Psalms are become quite obsolete, and the singing of them is now almost as despicable among the modern religious as it was some time ago among the profane.

I know this is a sore place, and I would touch it gently, as gently as I can with any hope of doing good. The value of poems above Psalms is become so great, and the singing of men's words, so as quite to cast out the word of God is become so universal (except in the church of England), that one scarce dares speak upon the subject: neither would I, having already met with contempt enough for preferring God's hymns to man's hymns, if a high regard for God's most blessed word did not require me to bear my testimony; and if I did not verily believe, that many real Christians have taken up this practice without thinking of the evil of it; and when they come to consider the matter carefully will rather thank me, than censure me, for freedom of speech.

Let me observe, then, that I blame nobody for singing human compositions. I do not think it sinful or unlawful, so the matter be scriptural. My complaint is against preferring men's poems to the good word of God, and preferring them to it in the church. I have no quarrel with Dr. Watts, or any living or dead versifier. I would not wish all their poems burnt. My concern is to see Christian congregations shut out divinely inspired Psalms, and take in Dr. Watts' flights of fancy; as if the words of a poet were better than the words of a prophet, or as if the wit of a man was to be preferred to the wisdom of God When the church is met together in one place, the Lord God has made a provision for their songs of praise—a large collection, and great variety—and why should not these be used in the church according to God's express appointment? I speak not of private people or of private singing, but of the church in its public service. Why should the provision which God has made be so far despised, as to become quite out of use? Why should Dr. Watts, or any hymn-maker, not only take the precedence of the Holy Ghost, but also thrust him entirely out of the church? Insomuch that the rhymes of a man are now magnified above the word of God,

even to the annihilating of it in many congregations. If this be right, men and brethren, judge ye. Examine with candour the evidence which has determined my judgment; so far as it is conclusive may it determine yours.

First, the Psalms are the word of God, with which no work of man's genius can be compared. His attributes are manifest in every page, and prove the author to be divine. His infinite wisdom shines throughout—his goodness appears to be matchless—his truth in every tittle infallible—his power almighty to bless the hearing, reading, and singing of his word. None that trusted in it was ever ashamed: for his faithfulness to it can never fail. The word of the Lord has been tried, and in very great difficulties, yea, in seeming impossibilities, but it was always made good. In every trial he "magnified his word above all his name;" he made it the means of bringing glory to his name and nature, and every perfection in Deity has been exalted by the faithfulness of God to his word. In this view of the Psalms, what is there to be put in competition with them? What man is like their author? What poetry is to be compared with the Psalms of God? Who can make the singing of any human verses an ordinance, or give a blessing to them, such as is promised, and is given to the singing of Psalms? For what reason then are they set aside in the church? Why are the words of man's genius preferred to the words of inspiration? Singing of Psalms is commanded by divine authority, and commanded as a part of divine worship; not left to man's wisdom how to provide for it, but is expressly provided for in the good word of God. And is not great contempt put upon this infinitely wise provision, when it is quite disused in the church, and man's word is preferred to it? What would you think of them who should throw aside all the scripture, and never read it at all in the congregation? And is it not an offence of the like nature, totally to neglect a part, a chief part of it, which was recorded for the use of the church, and in which its members were to sing the high praises of their God? It is hereby treated as useless and good for nothing. A very gross affront is put upon the love and wisdom which revealed this divine collection of hymns, and the church is deprived of the blessings promised to the singing of them, whereby it is robbed of one of its choicest treasures. If anything be sacrilege, this is. The Psalms are stolen out of the church, and thereby the members are deprived of the blessings promised to the singing of them: for God will not give you the end, if you neglect the means. Frequent are his commands in the Old Testament to sing Psalms, and we have several in the New: for instance, let the word (not something besides it, but the word) of Christ itself dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs—these are not different things, but different names for the same collection of Psalms, as they treat of different subjects. Psalms in praise of Immanuel, such especially as have hallelujah at the beginning or end, are called Hymns, and the Psalms which relate to the spiritual things of Christ and his kingdom, have the title of Song set before them by the Holy Spirit, such as 7, 18, 30, 45, 46, 48, 65, 66, 67, 68, 75, 76, 83, 87, 88, 92, 108, from 110 to 135. These Hymns and spiritual Songs were part of the scripture and part of the Psalms, scripture Hymns and scripture Songs, for the word of Christ in singing them was to dwell in them richly; not man's word, but Christ's; and when the apostle is speaking of them altogether, he calls both the Hymn and spiritual Song a Psalm. We render the word ψαλλοντες making melody, but it means singing the Psalm, and is as if he had said—when you use a Hymn to the praise of God, or a spiritual Song to any spiritual purpose, sing the Psalm so that one may teach and admonish the other. It was a service in which each is commanded to join, and each was to endeavour in it to profit the other. They were to try so to sing with the melody of the heart to the Lord as at the same time to consult each other's profit, that while the Lord was glorified the church might receive edifying Here is a full authority for the use of Psalms in the church, and a very clear direction how to sing them; and as following this direction was the divine means of making the word of Christ to dwell richly in believers, how poorly must it dwell in them who slight and despise the command, yea, so far as never to sing any Psalms at all.

If any real Christian would attend to this reasoning, how can he oppose it? Here is a collection of hymns appointed to be sung in the church by divine authority; but the authority is despised, and the collection is thrown aside. It comes from the inspiration of the Almighty, but the church entirely refuses to use it; is not this doing despite unto the Spirit of grace? The collection is large, and very particular in setting forth the praises of the adorable Immanuel; is it not a gross affront to him to sing none of his praises in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth? as if any praises were good enough for him, or as if he could be praised better in the words which man's wisdom teacheth. Men and brethren, consider whether this be not a very gross affront to the word of God, to the Spirit of God, and to the Son of God. Consider it well, and the Lord give you a right understanding in this matter.

Secondly, The singing of men's poems in the church, and setting aside the Psalms given by inspiration of God, is contrary to the prophecies of the Old Testament, and is an attempt to defeat them. They describe the state of the gospel church, and declare there should be great joy and gladness found in it; particularly they mention singing of Psalms, as the outward expression of their inward joy in the Lord. Thus we read, 1 Chron. xvi. 23, 24. "Sing unto the Lord all the earth, show forth from day to day his salvation: declare his glory among the heathen, his marvellous works among all the nations!" Of the same thing speaketh the prophet Isaiah, lvi. 6, 7. "Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, even every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in mine house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." How this joy was to be expressed, is mentioned in Psalm xcv. The prophet shows how believers should stir up one another to rejoice in singing Psalms: and St. Paul says this was written of the New Testament church. According to his explanation of the Psalm given in the 3d and 4th chapters of the Hebrews, the Holy Ghost here calls for the solemn worship of our Saviour, and requires him to be praised with Psalms: he presses this duty, together with public prayer, ver. 6, 7, and then demands obedient attention to the word of God, against which no man should harden his heart through unbelief: from whence it appears, that praising God solemnly, with singing Psalms, with public prayer, and with hearing the word, are still the ordinances of Christ, and are to continue to-day, even while it is called to-day, unto the end of the world. These prophecies have been fulfilled. The blessed gospel has brought joy and gladness into heathen lands, and this very day Psalms have been sung, and a pure offering of praise has been presented unto the Lord, and it will be presented unto him so long as there is a true church upon earth. What then shall we think of those pretended reformers, who have turned the Psalms out of the church, and who are acting as if they would try to defeat these prophecies? I wish they may not be found fighting against God: for they cannot stop their accomplishment. His word cannot be broken. As long as the earth shall continue, Psalms shall be sung in the church of Christ. In it there will always be found thanksgiving and the voice of melody, and these will be expressed in God's own way, in the matter, and words, and form of God's own appointment.

Consider this, ye who believe the scriptures to be the word of God: if you obey from the heart the form of doctrine therein delivered, you will begin to reason thus; yea, methinks I hear one of you say—Since God, by his sovereign grace, has put a new song in my mouth, it adds to my joy, that he has revealed the very words in which he would have me to praise him. He has foretold that the gospel should be received among the heathen, and that it should produce such effects as I now experience. Glory be to him, he has made me happy in Jesus, and my happiness is not only kept up, but I find it increases by singing the inspired Psalms of the Holy Ghost. Whoever leaves off the singing of Psalms, God forbid I should be of that number, I hope never to act so contrary to the honour of God, and to the profit of mine own soul.

Thirdly, Of the same sentiments has been the church of Christ in all ages: which is a strong argument in favour of Psalm singing. We know, from very clear testimony, that the Psalms were sung in the temple until its final destruction. We are certain that Christ made use of the Psalms. His apostles followed his example. The churches of Corinth, and Ephesus, and Colosse, made the singing of Psalms part of their public worship. Such of the twelve tribes as were scattered abroad, being persecuted for Christ's sake, did sing Psalms when they were in an happy frame: for they were commanded to do it by the apostle James. The church history affords abundant evidence of the use of the Psalms in every country converted to the faith, and of their being sung in the church, as a part of public worship. This has been the case in every age without interruption. The primitive Christians sung in all their church meetings. Eusebius says, in the second century, they sung Psalms in praise of Christ and his deity. In the time of Justin Martyr instrumental music was abolished, and he highly commends singing with the voice, because, says he, Psalms, with organs and cymbals, are fitter to please children, than to instruct the church. In the third century we read much of Psalm singing. Arius was complained of as a perverter of this ordinance. St. Augustine makes it a high crime in certain heretics, that they sung hymns composed by human wit. The sense in which the church of Christ understood this subject has been, till of late years, always one and uniform. Now we leave the ancient beaten path. But why? Have we found a better? How came we to be wiser than the prophets, than Christ, than his apostles, and the primitive Christians, yea, than the whole church of God? They with one consent have sung Psalms in every age. Here I leave the reader to his own reflections. There is one plain inference to be made from hence, none can easily mistake it. May he see it in his judgment, and follow it in his practice.

Fourthly, Singing of Psalms in the church is an ordinance commanded of God, prophesied of in the Old Testament, and hitherto fulfilled in the New. That Psalm singing is one of the means of grace has been shown before. It is part of public worship, enjoined of God, and to which he has promised his blessing. Now when you lay aside Psalms in the church, you at the same time cast out the ordinance: for they are inseparably one. The Psalm is the ordinance. Your practice speaks, as if you said—"We will neglect the means of increasing our joy in God; for we want no growing love to him, nor fresh communications of his love to us." Surely this is the language of those persons who live in the constant neglect of one of the divine ordinances. God appointed it in vain as to them. They make no more use of the Psalms, than if there were no such Hymns in being. And is not this opposing his authority? Is it not ungrateful to throw away his appointed means, and to think you can please him better with singing your own poetry than his? Is it not hurtful to yourselves? for in seeking the promised blessing in the way of will-worship, you certainly cannot find it. Because

Fifthly, The blessing is promised to the ordinance. You cannot have the end without the means. The Psalms were revealed, that we might in singing them express our joy in God, and thereby improve it. They were for the exercise of grace, and for the increase of grace; that we might sing with grace in our hearts, and make one another's hearts warmer by singing. The word is one of the means of grace; by hearing it, faith cometh; by constant hearing, faith is established. If the word was never heard, how could faith come? If the word be entirely neglected, how can faith grow? Prayer is one of the means of grace: it is appointed in order to keep up communion with God, and to bring down daily supplies of mercies from him: Could those be had without asking? Certainly they could not. Singing of Psalms is also one of the means of grace: How can the blessing promised to the means be received, if no Psalms be sung? What sort of a church would it be, in which the word was never read, nor prayers nor singing of Psalms, nor any means of grace used? It could not be a church of Christ: because his presence with, and his blessings to his people, are promised to them in the use of the means. The blessing accompanies the ordinance, and is promised unto it; God has joined them together, and they must not be put asunder. He will give honour, he does give honour to his own means. He makes them answer the

end of their institution. When the Psalms are sung in faith, they do rejoice the heart. The Holy Spirit blesses the singing, and causes mutual joy to abound, which is

Sixthly, Another reason for preferring divine psalms to man's poems. The Psalms were for the church service. When the members met, we read of their singing together, both in the Old Testament and in the New. It was their joint offering of praise. The Psalms were appointed to be sung in the congregation, that one might admonish another, which we do, by joining with them, by making the word of Christ dwell more richly in them, and by exercising their graces with ours. Thus we show our fellowship in the gospel. When we all sing the same psalm, it is as if the church had but one mouth to glorify God. And we never enjoy more of the presence of God, than while we are thus praising him together with thankful hearts. The Lord, who instituted the ordinance, promised this blessing to it: but when his Psalms are thrust out, and human compositions sung in their room, what reason have the singers to expect that he will give his good Spirit to quicken their hearts, and to inflame their devotion? He did not promise mutual edification, but to the use of his own means. He would have believers to teach and to exhort one another, but it was in singing his own Psalms: and when they do, he has met them and blessed them, and always will: but he has given no promise to be present, whenever the church meet together in public to sing their own compositions, or to make them full of joy with the light of his countenance, when they have been doing despite to his Spirit, and putting dishonour upon his word.

Perhaps these sentiments may arise from my great attachment to the word of God, with which others may not be affected as I am: for I am persuaded it is not possible for me to set too high a value upon the holy scriptures—as the revelation of the will of God, I want words to express my respect for them—as the revelation of his good will in Jesus, I reverence them next to himself. What more precious? What more delightful? They are, indeed, more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold: and the Psalms are sweeter than honey, yea, than the honey dropping from the comb. I find them so. They are my daily study, and daily delight. I do not boast, but praise. The more I read, the more I admire them. The description of Jesus in them is sweet: the meditation of him is sweeter than all other sweets. It often tastes so much of heaven, that it seems to me I cannot possibly bestow so much admiration upon the Psalms, as they deserve. This is my settled judgment confirmed by experience. I cannot help taking particular notice of this, because it fully confirms the arguments which have been before used.

Experience demonstrates, that God does bless the singing of psalms in the church, and does not bless the singing of men's hymns. It is a melancholy matter of fact, that in many congregations there is no reading of God's word, no singing of God's word. It is almost laid aside, even the great ordinance of God for all saving purposes. And what has followed? Truly, what might be expected; yea, what could not but follow. The Holy Spirit has been grieved, and has withdrawn his powerful presence. For want of which a deadness that may be felt is in such places. Of this good men have complained to one another, and are humbled for it before God. They find public worship without power. Prayer is lifeless. Preaching is voice and nothing more. It may be the truth, but the hearers are apt to fall asleep over it, and the preacher is no more animated, than if he was telling an old story. The channel of divine communication is quite stopped up: hence Ichabod may be seen and felt too upon such congregations. Reader, if thou art alive to God in thine own heart, thou knowest this to be true. And how does it affect thee? Certainly thou wilt join with me in begging of God to revive his work among us, and to put glory upon his ordinances. Oh that the Lord would return with his gracious presence to his worshipping people. May the Holy Spirit lead them to see their error in neglecting his established means of grace, especially his word read and sung. And whenever he does this, and wherever they put honour upon his word, there will he certainly put life and power into the ordinances, and the congregations shall again experience that God is among them of a truth.

And as God does not bless the singing of human compositions in his church, so it is a certain matter of fact, that he does bless the singing of his own Psalms. If the eyes of your understanding be opened, look around; where is the power of God most to be found? Among whom is he chiefly carrying on his work? And where are the liveliest congregations? If you know the present state of religion in this land, you can easily find them. God has made them very conspicuous. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. The builder of it did not intend it should. His gifts and graces are therefore conferred, that the giver may have all the glory. And who are most enriched with his gifts and graces? Are they not such as he has brought to use the means most? Who honour his word, never failing to make the reading of it part of public worship, and who never meet, but they sing out of the word the praises of their God. Among these the Lord the Spirit does work with power, and they do find in singing his Psalms, what they never find in singing men's poems. He makes all their church ordinances lively and edifying. He enables them to draw near to God in prayer, and they have happy communion with him: he hears, and answers. The word preached is mighty through God. Sinners are awakened. Mourners are comforted. Believers are strengthened. The word sung is also accompanied with the same power: the Psalms are made an ordinance indeed. The Holy Spirit works in and by them to keep up holy joy in believing hearts. He promised this, and the promise is fulfilled at this very hour. "The Lord shall comfort Sion, he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord, joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." Blessed be God for these favours now bestowed upon the church of England. This prophecy is ours. Adored for ever be his love. He is now with us of a truth, and he has turned our wilderness into the garden of the Lord. We do not triumph for this in ourselves. We do not look down with contempt upon others. No, no. We acknowledge it to be the Lord's doing, to the praise of the glory of his own grace; and to him we look for the continuance of this inestimable blessing. O that he would bestow it abundantly upon those congregations, who have the form without the power. This is the fervent prayer of my heart. I am sure our joy will increase by their sharing with us. May the good Lord revive his work in all his churches, and may the life and power vouchsafed to some be found in all.

What can any unprejudiced person infer from hence? Is not the case plain? Where is the presence of God most to be found? Among the singers of poems, or the singers of Psalms? What says matter of fact? It speaks to the point, and determines in favour of God's word. The Holy Spirit does not put honour upon man's poems, when set up in the church in opposition to his divine Hymns. Yea, he disgraces them. He pours contempt upon them, as it might be expected he would: for he leaves the singers to themselves, and then their performance is without life and power. It keeps up no communion with God. It administers no holy joy. It is not the means of grace, but degenerates into a mere entertainment, and is the same thing in the church, that music is in the playhouse.

How can that be, says one, I am a witness to the contrary: I have found profit in singing hymns, and I am sure I have received pleasure. You may fancy so, but perhaps it is only fancy: for your practice confutes your profession. God has revealed the Psalms for the use of the church, he has commanded them to be sung in it, and has promised to meet his rejoicing people, and in singing to make their joy abound: but you despise the command, and therefore you can have no title to the promise. You cannot have the end without the means: while you slight the ordinance, how can you possibly receive the blessing promised to it? For the Holy Ghost will not vouchsafe his joy to them who seek it in opposition to his sovereign will: so that you might be pleased, but profited you could not. The profit is God's blessing upon the use of his own means, but you did not use the means; nay, you despised his, and followed your own self-will. What profit could such singing bring you? What fellowship could you have with God in it, or what joy in God increased by it? You may bring

your poems into the church, and may be vastly delighted with performing them. So is the vainest creature alive at the opera. The pleasure in both cases arises from the same cause. The ear is pleased with the harmony, some animal joy is excited, a fine tune, well played, well sung, a very agreeable entertainment; but there could be no more spiritual edification in one than in the other: because neither of them was the ordinance of God.

What! say some, is it unlawful to sing human compositions in the church? How can that be? Why, they sing them at such a place, and such a place: great men, and good men, ay, and lively ministers too, sing them: will you set up your judgment against theirs?

It is an odious thing to speak of one's self, except it be to magnify the grace of God. What is my private judgment? I set it up against nobody in indifferent things: I would wish to yield to every man's infirmity: for I want the same indulgence myself. But in the present case the scripture, which is our only rule of judgment, has not left the matter indifferent. God has given us a large collection of hymns, has commanded them to be sung in the church, and has promised his blessing to the singing of them. No respect here must be paid to names or authorities, although they be the greatest on earth: because no one can dispense with the command of God, and no one can by his wit compose hymns to be compared with the Psalms of God. I want a name for that man, who should pretend that he could make better hymns than the Holy Ghost. His collection is large enough: it wants no addition. It is perfect as its author, and not capable of any improvement. Why in such a case would any man in the world take it into his head to sit down to write hymns for the use of the church? It is just the same as if he was to write a new Bible, not only better than the old, but so much better, that the old may be thrown aside. What a blasphemous attempt! And yet our hymn-mongers, inadvertently I hope, have come very near to this blasphemy: for they shut out the Psalms, introduce their own verses into the church, sing them with great delight, and as they fancy with great profit; although the whole practice be in direct opposition to the command of God, and therefore cannot possibly be accompanied with the blessing of God.

If any one be offended at my freedom of speech, I am sorry for it. I thought I had liberty to give mine opinion, especially in a matter wherein the honour of God, and of his word, required me to speak openly. Let this be mine apology. If you are not convinced, if you will still sing human compositions in preference to divine; pray do not quarrel with me. I am a man of peace. Go on your way, and let me go on mine. Let me sing God's psalms, and you may sing any body's hymns. I have borne my testimony. Forgive me this once, and after I have closed up the evidence with a very good witness, against whom the admirers of hymns can have no objection, I promise herein to offend you no more He is no less a person than the great Dr. Watts himself. He speaks full to the point, and gives his testimony very distinctly. He never intended, he says, to thrust the Psalms of God out of the church. His words in the preface to his hymns are these: "Far be it from my thoughts to lay aside the book of Psalms in public worship: few can pretend so great a value for them as myself: it is the most artful, most devotional, and divine collection of poesy; and nothing can be supposed more proper to raise a pious soul to heaven, than some parts of that book; never was a piece of experimental divinity so nobly written, and so justly reverenced and admired." Happy would it have been for the Christian world, if his followers had stopped just where he did. He declares it was far from his thoughts to do what they have done. It never came into his head to lay aside the book of Psalms in public worship. Think of this, and weigh it carefully, ye that idolize Dr. Watts, and prefer his poems to the infallible word of God. It would be well for you, if you valued psalms as much as he did: for he says none valued them more. Then you would have looked upon them in his light: for having already in your hands the most devotional and the most divine collection, you would not have thought of any other, knowing it was impossible to have a better, but you would have used this, and would have found it too, as Dr. Watts did, the most proper to raise the soul to heaven. Blessed sentiments! I honour

the memory of Dr. Watts for this glorious testimony. I can say nothing that can bear harder upon those persons, who, contrary to his opinion, have entirely left off singing the Psalms of God in the church. He never intended to countenance such a practice. He declares it was far from his thoughts, yea, he abhorred the very thought, and in so saying he has upon record condemned it. Here I rest the matter. If the admirers of Dr. Watts will not be determined by his authority, I am sure they will not be mine: and therefore I take my leave of them. Farewell. May the Lord guide you into all truth.

There are several abuses among us relative to the music, which I wish to see reformed, and some of which I would point out. We have many good psalm tunes, excellently composed and fitted for public worship. These should be studied, in order that they may be well sung, and properly applied. *Sung well* to avoid the tedious drawling manner in use in most of our churches, which gives offence to worldly people, and makes the ordinance dull and heavy to believers. *Properly applied*, and suited to the subject, that the sound may, as near as possible, express the sense: for want of understanding or attending to this, we very often hear a light tune to a mournful prayer, and heavy music set to a joyful psalm, which are grievous discords. In the service of God every thing should be solemn. Our own minds require it, as well as his greatness; but especially in praising him, we should try to shut out whatever would distract us, or dishonour him. When the heart is affected, or desires to be duly affected, with a sense of the exceeding riches of his mercy in Jesus, the psalm and the tune should help to excite, and to keep up the heavenly flame. If the psalm be proper for this purpose, the tune should not defeat it. This was much studied in the primitive church. They had great simplicity in their psalm singing, which we are told was corrupted by the heretics. Complaint is made particularly of Arius, that he perverted singing into an entertainment. He had a taste for music, and he composed several light, frothy tunes, by which he sought to please trifling people, who, with him, neither loved the God, nor the praises of the God of the Christians. Herein he succeeded. His music was admired, and did a great deal of hurt. Let us take warning from hence. As far as we can, let our praises of God be sung with such music as will solemnize our hearts, and keep them in tune to make melody unto the Lord.

I will only mention one thing more, which is a great impropriety, and to me very offensive, and that is the posture generally used among us in singing. Suppose there had been nothing at all said about it in the scripture, judge ye with yourselves, men and brethren, whether it be respectful and becoming to sit down to sing. When subjects go upon any joyful occasion to address their sovereign, is it a custom in any nation of the world to do it sitting? Does the person who pays homage sit, or he who receives it? But it is not left to ourselves, or to what we may think right or wrong. The case is determined in scripture, and there are precedents to go upon. The singers and musicians stood, when they performed in the temple service: so did all the people, 1 Chron. ii. 28, &c. "The office of the Levites was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord in the courts and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God: and to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening." This was their appointment; and we read of their fulfilling it, 2 Chron. v. 12, where it is said, "they stood at the east end of the altar:" and we are certain that all the congregation of Israel stood at the same time: for it is expressly mentioned. When the royal prophet is encouraging the priests and people in the heavenly work of praise, he thus addresses the priests, Psalm cxxxiv. "Behold, bless ye the Lord all ye servants of the Lord, who by night stand in the house of the Lord: lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord. The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Sion." So again speaking to priests and people, Psalm cxxxv. "Praise ye the Lord, praise ye the name of the Lord: praise him O ye servants of the Lord: ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, praise ye the Lord, for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name for it is pleasant." Standing to sing is recommended in those scriptures, and was accordingly practised both by

clergy and laity: when they thanked the Lord morning and evening in the words of David the man of God, they sung his praises standing. It is a decent posture. People of fashion think it so: for they stand up even in the playhouse, at the Hallelujahs in the oratorio of the Messiah. Our very good church people think so: for if they sit down at the Psalm, they are sure to stand up at the *Gloria patri*. It is indeed highly becoming the majesty of the great King of heaven and earth, and it is also expressive of our readiness to join our brethren in praising his holy name. As such I would recommend it. The venerable practice of antiquity has something more to enforce it than mere propriety: at least it calls upon me to try to keep up an uniformity with the church of Christ in this particular. But if you think otherwise, and prefer sitting, lolling, or any lazy indolent posture, I will not unchristian you. We may differ, and not quarrel; nay, I will not quarrel with you, if you will but let me observe, when I see any person irreverently sitting down, after he has been called upon to sing to the praise and glory of God, and after a suitable psalm has been given out, it seems to me, as if he said—indeed his behaviour speaks louder than any words can—"You may sing, but I will not—I will exercise no grace—I want no more grace—I have no melody in my heart, and therefore I will make none with my mouth—I will take myself away while you are singing, and I will sit down to show that I have no part with you in this ordinance."

The abuses here complained of are not to be easily remedied. I know they are not; but I have done my duty. Some of them are of long standing, not soon to be rooted out. Some are the consequences of mere profession, which renders all ordinances ineffectual: for they are only blessed to any one, as he observes them in true faith. Others are not looked upon to be profanations of the ordinance, but refinements of it; against such I only deliver my sentiments, not from the chair, as a Pope; but I beg leave to give my opinion, and if I could, I would do it without offence. If any one be offended, I am sorry for it. I would not hurt a worm. However, we are all agreed I hope in one thing, and let us improve that. It is our joint desire to please God in singing his praises. If this be pursued, it will tend to reform every abuse relating to this ordinance. His glory should be aimed at with a single eye. When this is the ruling principle, the heart would enter into the service, and then it would soon influence the outward man. There would be no neglect, no contempt, no misbehaviour, if gratitude to God in Christ inspired our songs. We should love to present such praises and in such a manner, as would best express our thankfulness, and we should study to avoid every thing which would render them unprofitable to ourselves or others, or dishonourable to him.

Let me intreat you, men and brethren, never to forget this point. Set God always before you, whenever you are going to sing Psalms. Do it as in his presence and to his glory. If you think it your bounden duty to sing with your voices to be heard of one another, take heed that you sing with your hearts unto the Lord. Let it be the service of every faculty, and each exerted to the utmost. Praise your blessed Immanuel with your warmest gratitude. Give him the best you have. He richly deserves it. And remember you thereby pay him nothing again: you only give him his own. Your gratitude is the gift of his grace, and by it you only make acknowledgment of your vast obligations to him. O beg of him then to enable you to praise him with a growing sense of your debt, and of his increasing favours. And may you so praise him, as to find fresh reason to continue your praises from day to day, and for evermore.

Whoever is in this humble happy frame, will be kept from a temptation, into which most of our hymn singers have fallen. I have heard several of them, who would by no means be thought common rate understandings, object to Sternhold and Hopkins. They wonder I would make use of this version, which they think is poor flat stuff, the poetry is miserable, and the language low and base. To which I answer: they had a scrupulous regard for the very words of scripture, and to those they adhered closely and strictly; so much as to render the versification not equal to Mr. Pope. I grant, it is not always smooth: it is only here and there brilliant. But what is a thousand times more valuable, it is generally the sentiment of the Holy Spirit. That is very rarely lost. And this should silence

every objection—*it is the word of God.* Moreover the version comes nearer to the original than any I have ever seen, except the Scotch, which I have made use of, when it appeared to me better expressed than the English. You may find fault with the manner of ekeing out a verse for the sake of rhyme; but what of that? here is every thing great, and noble, and divine, although not in Dr. Watts's way or style. It is not, like his, fine sound and florid verse: as good old Mr. Hall used to call it, *Watts's Jingle.* I do not match those Psalms with what is now admired in poetry; although time was, when no less a man than the Rev. T. Bradbury, in his sober judgment, thought so meanly of Watts's Hymns as commonly to term them *Watts's Whymns.* And indeed, compared to the scripture, they are like a little taper to the sun: as for his Psalms, they are so far from the mind of the Spirit, that I am sure if David was to read them, he would not know any one of them to be his.

Besides, you are offended at the scripture style, and Dr. Watts must mend it. This is owing to a very false taste. For the scripture wants no mending; nay, it is always worse for mending. It is plain in majesty. God has not written it to please the imagination, but to convert the heart, and to comfort and to edify the soul; therefore the inspired writers have used great plainness of speech. They disclaim all painted language and oratorical colouring. One of them, speaking for the rest, says—"We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." To his words the understanding should bow, and with reverence receive them: because they are his. Curiosity should be dumb. It should make no inquiry: "Are they fine words, poetical, dressed up with flowers and metaphors, brilliant as Cowley, smooth as Pope." No, they are not; but they are revealed to make the man of God wise unto salvation, and they do. As such, the finest poetry of man is no more to be compared with them, than man is to be compared with God. His word is the great instrument of salvation. It is the ordinance of God for every saving purpose. He works in it and by it, and therefore it is plain and simple, that the glory may not be given to the means themselves, but to his almighty grace, which makes them effectual. How unlikely is the word preached so to change a sinner's heart, that he shall be as much a new creature, as if a devil was made an angel; and yet this effect is daily produced, and by plain preaching too. Thus the most successful preacher that ever was, declares—"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God." And his power is promised, and is also experienced to this very day in the use of the means of grace. God does give his blessing to them. What more simple than the sacraments? Yet through Christ working mightily in them, they do answer the end of their institution? What so unlikely as prayer to obtain all needful blessings? and yet it is certain matter of fact, that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. So the Psalms, not trimmed up with human embellishments, but in the simple dress of scripture, do communicate holy joy in the Lord. He blesses the means, because they are his own means, and when used in faith, he never fails to render them effectual. Here then let us look, not at fine words, but at God's word. Let us not be offended at its simplicity: for it is purposely so. It is written for profit, and not for amusement. As an instrument, it has not the virtue in itself, that the excellency of the power exerted by it may be of God. He would have all the glory. Our own joy in singing, and our neighbour's edification, shall not arise from fine poetry, but from his effectual grace. How much is it to be wished, that this was more regarded in singing Psalms. Then should we hear no more of this objection; but believers in the use of this, and of all the means of grace, would be seeking not entertainment, but communion with God, which is our highest privilege, and they would be expecting the improvement of it, which is their highest happiness.

Another objection may be made to this collection. If all the Psalms be alike the word of God, why should these be selected, and the rest excluded? I do not exclude any, not a letter or tittle. They are all of equal authority, all given by

the inspiration of the Almighty. There is the same divine stamp and impression upon every word. For which reason I reverence what is left, as much as these: but these are sufficient for our use, and these, if rightly used, will lead us to understand and to value the rest. If any thing here said should be the means of explaining the subject of the book of Psalms, and of enabling believers to see more of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, then they will not only value this collection, but will also, as occasion offers, sing the rest with increasing melody in their hearts unto the Lord.

The collection of Psalms, which I have here made, cannot be sung aright by any one, unless he thus aims at the glory of God. He must be a true believer in Jesus, and made sensible of the Father's love to him in his Son; because they are chiefly songs of praise, and require the music of the heart: he who is in tune to make the best melody, has the deepest sensc of his obligations to free grace. He has found redemption through the blood of Jesus, and is convinced of his acceptance through the righteousness of Jesus. He sees all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, provided for him by the Father's love in the Son's fulness, and by the faith of the operation of the Holy Spirit he receives them, as he wants them, day by day. He feels himself a poor needy creature, unworthy of the least of those blessings, and while he is in this humble frame he is thankful for the least. Then he is most disposed to give the glory of all his mercies to the eternal Three, and to acknowledge his debt in every appointed way. This makes him desirous of profiting others by singing the praises of that good God, who has so exceedingly loved him, and herein he has an especial regard to his brethren in Christ. As a church-member he frequents ordinances, enters into the spirit of them, prays in the Holy Ghost, hears and mixes faith with the word, sings with the congregation, and with his heart and voice tries to increase their melody. He lives the Christian. In his walk and conversation he shows forth the praises of God. He glorifies his Father which is in heaven, before men, and lets them see, that they who are happy believers in Jesus, have found their heaven upon earth. Thus he goes on his way, singing and rejoicing in the Lord—ready to join the great concert of saints and angels—yea, he does join, ascribing with them all the good he has, and hopes for, to the free grace of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity.

Reader, art thou one of this happy number? Is thy heart in tune to sing Psalms of praise to thy God? Is he thy Father which art in heaven, and dost thou love him for the unspeakable gift of his Son? Until he be known to thee in this dear relation, thou canst not be happy in him either in earth or heaven. If thou art thinking he has mercy in store for thee, how wast thou brought to believe it? Was it in God's appointed way, and in his means? Didst thou hear his word declaring what thy state was, and didst thou yield to its testimony, persuaded thou wast under guilt and in great danger? Wast thou convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, how abominably filthy it made thee in the sight of an holy God—how guilty in the sight of a just God, and how utterly helpless it has left thee in thyself? Did this conviction follow thee? Wast thou made deeply and thoroughly sensible, that thou canst do nothing for thyself, but hasten on thy ruin? Such is thy captivity to sin, all the powers and faculties of thy soul and body are in such bondage to it, that thou canst do nothing but serve it, yea, thou art such a willing slave, that if God leavc thee to thyself, thou wilt go on sinning through time, and sinning through eternity.

Didst thou never see thyself in this state? The scripture declares, that thou art by nature a child of wrath—and dost not thou believe the word of God? Are its threatenings an idle tale? What! art thou still asleep in the arms of sin, in the midst of the thunder of the vengeance of God—still dreaming of happiness in the ways of sin, which God assures thee in his word will lead thee to destruction? Oh desperate delusion! May God deliver thee from it. May the eternal Spirit accompany his own message, and send it to thy heart. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

If thou hast been made sensible of thy danger, what thinkest thou of Christ? If thou hast seen thyself a lost sinner, who is to savc thee? To whom, or to what dost thou look for help? To man, or to God? To thyself, or to Christ?

To thy works, or his? Is Christ become thine only object? Examine with care: for there is but one right way to the city of habitation. "I am the way," says Jesus. Be assured there is salvation for thee in no other. Nothing can wash thee clean, but the atoning blood of Jesus. Nothing can justify thee, but his righteousness. His all-sufficient grace alone can keep thee in the way to heaven. He alone can present thee spotless there before the throne. Every other hope will disappoint thee but hope in Jesus. One day all the rest will prove refuges of lies. If thou buildest on them now with confidence, they will fail thee at the bar of God. Thou wilt then find, that other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

If thou art enabled to build upon this rock, happy art thou. Hail, thou that art highly favoured: the Lord is with thee. He has encouraged thee to place the whole weight of thy salvation upon the work of Jesus, who is Immanuel, the Creator, and the Supporter of all worlds, visible and invisible. Trust in him, and be not afraid: for he is almighty to save. And he has given thee his infallible promises to satisfy thee, that in him thou art safe from all thy sins, and from all thine enemies. Oh how establishing are his own words! Thus he speaketh to thee—"Whosoever cometh unto me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man, who built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock, and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock." How happy is thy state! Thou art come to him at his bidding, thou hast heard his sayings, and art doing them in faith: survey thy safety and bless the Lord. Thou art the wise man, who builds on a foundation contrived by infinite wisdom, and supported by almighty power, "Behold," says the Father, "I lay in Sion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone," &c. The Father chose his co-equal Son, on whom he would build his whole church; he is therefore called an elect foundation; and sure, as sure as God can make it; his will and word, his arm and love secure the foundation and every thing built upon it. Try it again and again, and thou wilt find how sure it is. This is another of its divine excellences—it is a tried foundation, none ever built on it and were confounded. Believers have made trial of it in every age, and it always answered their hopes: indeed how could it fail them? For the divine Architect has so strengthened every part of his structure, that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. How precious then is this foundation! "To them that believe he is precious." All the beauties and pleasures in heaven and earth are to be found in his fulness, and in the creature only as a drop out of the ocean. Unscarchable riches are his: so are eternal glories. Blessed is the man who is living upon his fulness. While he is receiving out of it grace for grace, oh how precious is Jesus! especially while he is hoping to receive out of the same fulness the glory that is to be revealed: for he shall not be disappointed of his hope; because "the righteous hath an everlasting foundation." He is built upon the rock of ages, and is kept there by the power of God. Oh happy, thrice happy believer. Again survey thy mercies—see how many, how great they are—to thy body—to thy soul—family, church, national mercies—sure and covenant mercies. Who is like unto thee saved by the Lord? The Father is thine with all his love. The Son is thine with all his salvation. The Holy Spirit is thine in all his offices, to comfort, to strengthen, and to sanctify thee, to lead thee safe by his counsel, till he bring thee unto glory. And this is also thine with its richest blessings—eternal life is the free gift of God to thee through Jesus Christ thy Lord. Oh, what has God done for thee! saved from deserved destruction, and saved with such a salvation, so wrought out for thee, so secured to thee, and for ever, what could God do more? Now thou hast learned the subject of praise, and canst make sweet melody with these words—"I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry; he brought me up also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings: and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." None can learn this new song, except he be redeemed from the earth—a saved sinner, delivered from the pit of corruption, and finding his feet set fast upon the rock of salvation, sings it from experience. He feels

what he sings. His heart and mouth go together in blessing the Lord his God. Now he wants no comment upon the Psalms of praise. He is taught them by the Holy Spirit, and can sing them with delight. A grateful sense of the divine favours freely conferred upon him keeps him in tune, humble and thankful. And this is the right frame of mind to offer up the sacrifice of praise, with which God is well pleased. He accepts it from saints and angels round the throne, and he accepts it also from us, when we present it in their spirit. The humblest upon earth pay him the highest service, as he declares—"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me."

Reader, is this thine experience? Dost thou sing Psalms, and didst thou learn to sing them in this way? Wast thou enabled by faith to love God in Christ, and art thou now blessing him with a rejoicing heart? Is his glory the end and aim of all thy services? If it be (but beware of mistakes) then thou art accepted in Jesus, and so are thy songs. May thy delight in singing them increase. I wish to be a helper of thy joy, and to that end let us take a short review of the subject. Thou wilt see the graces needful for singing of Psalms, and if thou findest God has bestowed them upon thee, then make use of them: offer up through Jesus Christ thy sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of thy lips, giving thanks to his name.

1. Dost thou understand the subject of the book of Psalms, and enter into it in singing? Dost thou see the praises of Immanuel celebrated throughout, and canst thou take up the words and sing them with melody in thy heart? Being one with Jesus by faith, and a partaker of his fulness, thou wilt see a new glory in the Psalms; for thou wilt read thine own interest in all that Christ is and has, and wilt make use of it too, receiving from him grace for grace. This will inspire thy soul with warm devotion to the Lord Christ, and will lead thee greatly to prize this blessed book. Thou will delight to

2. Study the scripture names of it. Dost thou attend to them? Have they their proper weight with thee, so as to convince thee thoroughly, that the Saviour in his several offices and works is the person treated of in the book of Psalms? The different names are only to describe him in different views as the Giver of every blessing in earth and heaven, Hymns to celebrate his praises, Spiritual Songs to set forth the glory of his kingdom, and the happiness of his subjects. Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, altogether intended to raise the affections of the soul to as high a pitch of love to Immanuel, as we are capable of, while in the body.

3. When thou art reading the Old Testament or the New, and observing the passages in which the Psalms are mentioned, do they farther confirm thee in the belief of their being written concerning Christ? And mixing faith with them, do they warm thy heart with gratitude to Jesus, and stir thee up to sing his praises with increasing delight? But, above all, consider

4. How thou singest the Psalms. Examine. Art thou made a new creature in Christ Jesus, and a partaker of his Spirit? Dost thou then sing with thine understanding, and with thy heart, singing Psalms as an ordinance of God to exercise grace, and to increase the grace which he has given? And dost thou indeed find it profitable to thyself, and edifying to others?

5. Dost thou keep up the harmony in thy life? Is thy walk in concord with thy Psalms? Art thou showing forth the praises of Jesus in thy conversation? What! is all consistent and of a piece? Are thy heart, and voice, and life, in tune to thank the Lord for his goodness, and to declare the wonders which he hath done for thy soul? Oh this is heavenly music. Happy man, to whom it is given thus to live the Christian. May there be no discord in thy tempers and walk, but may all within and without thee conspire in sweet concert to bless thy Lord and thy God.

6. If the Lord has thus enabled thee to sing, and to love his praises, then, art thou humble enough to study to please others as well as thyself in singing, that they may be edified? If there has been any abuse in this ordinance, dost thou stand corrected, and art willing to reform? Is it thy desire in public singing to give no offence to outward people, but above all to give none to the church of God? This is the Christian temper. Show it. Let it appear that the mind is in thee, which was also in Christ Jesus. Aim, in singing, at the profit of others. Look not to

thyself alone, that thou bearest thy part, with thine understanding, heart, and voice, but endeavour also to edify the church. See thy neighbour be benefited according to the command—"Teach and admonish one another in Psalms," &c. Let this and all other things in the congregation be done to edifying.

If, upon careful inquiry, thou dost understand those truths, dost thou experience the power and comfort of them? Art thou indeed a living Christian, capable of singing them with melody in thy heart unto the Lord? If this be thy happy case, then accept this collection of Psalms, which I here present to thee, not in preference to any of those here omitted, or to exclude any of them, but only as a sufficient number for our regular service. Go, and make use of them, and the Lord be with thee. May he render them profitable to thine own soul, and edifying to his body the church. Pray for grace to glorify him more in this ordinance. It will soon be thy whole employment. Yet a very little while, and thou wilt have nothing to do, but to enjoy and to praise Immanuel for evermore. May thy heart now feel something of this heaven: and if it please him, may thy happiness daily increase, in the enjoyment of, and thankfulness for, all covenant mercies, till thou art admitted to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to join with them in ascribing all the glory of thy salvation to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, to whom be equal and everlasting praises. Amen.

THE END.

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